



오크지만 찬양해

이정민
판타지 장편소설

1

몬스터

Praise the Orc!

– 오크지만 찬양해! –

- Volume 4 -

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[Rainbow Turtle | Wuxiaworld]

CHAPTER 76

ORCHEIM (1)

“Thank you,” Caburak said. He was one of the slaves rescued by Crockta and Tiyo. His pronunciation was strange due to his broken teeth, but he laughed like he didn’t care. “I am alive thanks to people like you.”

He was riding behind Tiyo on the caruk. Tiyo complained, “Be careful, you spit every time you speak *dot!*”

Caburak laughed, “Sorry, kyulkyulkyul! I heard that you are going North, but what is your specific destination?”

“We are heading for the Temple of the Fallen God.”

“The Fallen God...?”

“Ask Crockta.”

Tiyo gestured towards Crockta. Crockta looked at Caburak and nodded. “Yes.”

“What brings you there?”

“There is something I want to find out personally.”

Crockta looked at the distant horizon. If they continued this way, they would arrive at a village of dark elves. Although they were hostile towards orcs, he needed to find a way to reach the Temple of the Fallen God.

Caburak was heading North to his hometown, so they would travel together to the dark elf village before splitting up.

“Hrmm... Fallen God...” Caburak muttered.

Crockta laughed and asked, “Do you know about the Temple of the Fallen God?”

“From what I know... hrmm...” Caburak looked up at the sky in an exaggerated manner

and touched his chin. "If I were you... hrmm..."

"What is it?"

"Crockta... I want to ask you. Why did you save me?"

"Does there need to be a reason?"

"It is like... a personal belief? Or..."

Crockta laughed and replied, "I am a warrior."

"Right, a warrior. The ones who captured us were also warriors."

"A real warrior."

"A real warrior?"

"On the southern continent, you can't become a warrior just because you are strong. Fighters aren't warriors."

Crockta pointed to his tattoos. He had received the Tattoos of Honor when he first became a warrior, and they were now upgraded to Tattoos of Honor and Fighting Spirit.

These were granted by the shaman who controlled the warrior's ritual, and evolved with the warrior's actions and beliefs. Unlike Crockta, there were those who had Tattoos of Power or Tattoos of Revenge.

Obviously, those who didn't qualify as warriors couldn't get the tattoos. No matter how much power the shaman put in, the tattoos wouldn't appear. On the continent, any orcs with tattoos would be a warrior.

Crockta continued, "If I had to give you a reason, I would say one thing."

"What is it?"

"The warrior's laws, the fifth one."

"Umm?"

“A warrior doesn’t shame the gods!” Crockta grinned. “Turning others into slaves is a shameful thing.”

Orcs rarely mentioned the gods. The first he heard of it was when Lenox taught him the warrior’s laws in the Hall of Fame. Orcs didn’t have statues towards gods like the Goddess of Benevolence or God of Light like the other species. There were no temples, festivals or a religion that borrowed the divine power of the god.

Nevertheless, the warrior’s laws were an oath to the gods. So Crockta guessed that it was like a belief in his heart.

“The gods!” Caburak’s eyes widened. “Gods!”

As if he was listening to the echo, he repeated it once and closed his eyes. Then he laughed loudly, “Kyulkyulkyulkyul! A warrior talking about the gods!”

Caburak tapped on the shoulder of Tiyo who was steering the caruk.

“Hey, Tiyo! The orcs in the south are like this! Kyulkyulkyul!”

“It hurts *dot*, hit me gently!”

“Sorry, kyulkyulkyulkyul!” Caburak laughed as the caruk cried out. Caburak felt sorry towards the caruk and patted its ass. “You want to go to the Temple of the Fallen God?”

“Yes.”

“If you aren’t in a hurry then you should follow me!”

Caburak pointed to the mountain range that had started to appear on the Northeast horizon. “My beautiful home is located in the Luklan Mountains!”

Tiyo’s eyes shone at the prospect of a new destination. Tiyo wanted to explore everywhere in the North. “Hoh, it sounds magical!”

“Kyulkyul, there are also gnomes living nearby.”

“Hoh, the Northern gnomes, it must be an impressive place!”

Tiyo glanced at Crockta. His eyes expressed a desire to go there. Crockta shrugged.

“There is no reason not to. But why are you inviting us all of a sudden?”

Caburak pointed to Crockta. “You mentioned the gods!”

“Gods?”

“The Northern orcs that remember the gods have disappeared! Everybody has forgotten! Then you appeared and mentioned the gods, so I should invite you!” Caburak shouted with a shine in his eyes.

“To the Holy Land of the orcs, Orcheim!”



They started to climb the mountain. The caruks were able to climb the mountain due to their low center of gravity, but they were breathing hard after a short period of time. The group decided to take a break.

Until recently, they had run through the wilderness and now they were climbing a mountain. The Northern terrain was really fickle.

Crockta looked at Caburak.

At first, he was an orc captured by the slave merchants. After seeing Crockta defeat Hammerchwi, the clan warriors, and the slave traders, Caburak asked if he could join them on their way. Others were thankful to Crockta but they also felt fear. Caburak talked intimately with Crockta, the warrior who defeated the Great Clan warriors, without any fear.

It wasn't like Caburak had no idea what was going on. Caburak just had a strange optimism that couldn't be understood. He wasn't broken despite being a slave.

“I'm glad to be going back home!” He smiled at Crockta.

Tiyo asked from where he was lying on top of the caruk, “Hey! Caburak! Where are the gnomes *dot*?”

“It is near Orcheim so you can stop by there, kyulkyul.”

“I wonder what the Northern gnomes will look like!” Then Tiyo pointed to Crockta.

“The Northern orcs are just strange Crockta! The gnomes will be different *dot!* Hahahahat!”

“Kuoong.”

“Oh Caburak, I didn’t mean you *dot!* Kikik!”

“You’re not wrong. This gnome friend talks without any hesitation! Kyulkyulkyul!”

Their laughs echoed on the mountain. Then soon rose from their seat.

“If we go a little future then it will appear.”

They dragged the caruks up the mountain. The mountain gradually became rougher. Caburak wasn’t in a good state so he kept stumbling or falling on the steep path. Crockta and Tiyo helped him.

“Kyulkyulkyul! Thank you!”

They climbed the mountain and reached a ridge.

“It is over there.” Caburak pointed down the mountain.

It was a wonderful scenery. There were no other mountains in the vicinity and the horizon was clear. The Northern landscape was beautifully spread below them, from the wasteland where they walked to plains and forests.

“Beautiful,” admired Crockta.

“This is exciting, kyulkyulkyul!”

The moment he burst out laughing. An arrow flew past the face of the smiling Caburak.

Susuk!

“.....!”

His cheek was sliced and there was a thin line of blood.

“Huh...?”

Caburak frowned as he touched his wound. Crockta quickly grabbed his arm and pulled him down.

“The enemy.”

“Where *dot*?”

Tiyo immediately pointed General in the direction that the arrow came from. It was from the ridge above them. Crockta stared at the other side. The bushes faintly shook. An arrow flew once again.

Crockta moved Ogre Slayer and blocked the arrow. The arrow fell to the ground after hitting the greatsword. The greatsword shook from the shock. Caburak picked up the arrow from where he was lying down.

“Dark... dark elf arrows...”

“Dark elves.”

Crockta had seen some dark elves on the continent. Unlike elves, dark elves had dark hair and tanned skin. Their physical abilities were better than general elves. Indeed, the arrows had power.

“Where are they?”

Tiyo shouted as he aimed General. Colorful magic bullets shot into the forest. The bushes exploded from the energy released. At that moment, there was a low scream. Tiyo shouted again.

“If you don’t want me to become even angrier, then reveal your identity at once!”

The bushes shook and the voice of a dark elf was heard. It was the voice of a woman. “Are you the dogs of the Great Clan?”

“What are you saying *dot*! We have nothing to do with them!”

The dark elf hiding in the bushes became silent before speaking again. “Then who are you?”

“Show yourself first!”

“...I am Yanura, a ranger of Dejame.”

She looked at Crockta, Tiyo and Caburak on the slopes. Caburak nodded. He rose from his spot.

“I am Caburak and I’m returning to Orcheim!”

“Orcheim?”

Then a dark elf rose from the bushes. With black hair and dark skin, she was a beautiful woman. She carried a heavy bow that looked much bigger than her body.

“What is an orc from Orcheim doing here?”

“I am returning to Orcheim after a trip, but why is a dark elf of Dejame here?”

“A trip... that’s right. You probably don’t know yet.” She nodded. “Things have changed while you were away. Orcheim and Dejame are now allied together to guard this area.”

“From what?”

She frowned as she looked at Tiyo. Then Tiyo stiffened at her next words.

“It is due to the wicked gnomes.”



They headed to Orcheim with Yanura.

During the trip, they could hear her explanation.

There were orcs, dark elves and gnomes living in their respective areas in the Luklan Mountains. Unlike the orcs and dark elves who fought outside, they enjoyed a self-sufficient and peaceful life. But the gnomes broke this balance.

They betrayed both species and joined with the Great Clan.

After the gnomes leaked the circumstances and security of this place, orcs from the Great Clan came to the Luklan Mountains and started to plunder and slaughter the people. The gnomes benefited from attacking the other species with the orcs.

There was a secret contract, so the conditions for the gnome must involve the Luklan Mountains.

Unlike the other species in the North, the gnomes had no independent armies. There were just small communities scattered around. So the gnomes of the Luklan Mountains were trying to build their own territory here.

Tiyo was devastated by the words.

“T-The Northern gnomes...”

“Kulkul, the Northern gnomes are also strange.”

Crockta teased him. Tiyo dropped his head with a grouchy expression. He was sorry.

Yanura looked towards Crockta and said, “I want to apologize for attacking you. I’ll escort you to Orcheim. That way, you won’t be misunderstood.”

She was subtly looking Crockta up and down. An orc from the south. He felt different from the orcs here. His body was covered with tattoos and such a huge sword was rare. She instinctively felt that Crockta was strong.

It would be great if he helped out.

“Why are going to Orcheim?” asked Yanura.

Crockta nodded towards Caburak and answered, “He said that Orcheim is the orc’s Holy Land. I was curious, so I decided to stop by.”

“Holy Land?”

She looked at him like she didn’t know it.

As they continued walking, orcs started to be seen. Orcheim was located flat on the mountainside after crossing over the Luklan Mountains. It wasn’t a developed place but it was a well-maintained village. Orcs were returning from their hunting while carrying a big wild boar. The gazes of the orcs gathered as a group containing a dark elf, gnome and orcs appeared.

Caburak took the lead. He made a regal gesture.

“I’m back! Orcheim!” shouted the freed slave. The orcs looked puzzled but they soon shouted his name.

“Caburak!”

“Caburak has returned!”

“Caburak?”

Crockta and Tiyo exchanged glances. They thought he was a good and frivolous orc, but was he actually a great orc?

“Wait a minute, Caburak?”

Yanura looked like she was reminded of something. Then she spoke in a trembling voice. “The son of the Orcheim Chief who disappeared, the genius orc shaman Caburak?”

Crockta and Tiyo’s eyes widened. They looked at Caburak. Caburak was spreading both arms wide open. His hands glowed white with his magic power. He was using an unknown magic.

“I, Caburak have returned!”

Pink petals started to appear in the arm in accordance with his strength. The petals blew in the breeze as Caburak laughed heartily.

CHAPTER 77

ORCHEIM (2)

Once he heard about Caburak's return, Caburak's father and the Orcheim chief Gorit came running. He was a sturdy orc carrying a huge battle axe.

Caburak was still laughing while surrounded by pink flower petals.

The eyes of the two orcs met. It was a welcome reunion after a long time. There were all sorts of emotions in Caburak and Gorit's eyes.

"Father!"

Gorit was also thrilled. The son he hadn't seen for a long time had returned!

Crockta and Tiyo, who accompanied Caburak for a while, felt warm in their hearts as they watched the reunion. They quietly slipped back. Caburak and Gorit walked towards each other like they were going to hug passionately.

The petals created by Caburak's magic streamed through the air. And...

Peeok!

"Huuk!"

Gorit grabbed Caburak's collar and launched him into the air.

"F-Father?"

"This guy disappeared without a word and now you are back?" It was a serious punch. "And what about the Constellation Staff?"

"I-It was destroyed, Father..."

"You...!"

Gorit tried to hit his son again, but the orcs around him stopped it. It wasn't easy to stop the big Gorit, so many orcs had to hold onto him tightly. Gorit kept yelling wildly.

“Villagers! Listen to me! This son of mine suddenly disappeared with the treasure of my house, only to reappear and say that it is broken! Villagers, isn’t this nonsense...!”

“If you hit him anymore then he might die.”

Caburak muttered, “My life has been saved three times...”

“I’ve lost my patience a long time ago! Now I will kill you!”

“Uhuh!”

Crockta and Tiyo watched the disturbance from the corner.

“Cough.”

“It must hurt *dot...*”

They were the guests but they didn’t receive any attention because of Caburak. No, if it was known that they were Caburak’s guests, Gorit might be furious at them as well.

Crockta asked the dark elf Yanura standing next to him. “What happened?”

“I don’t know. Gorit had a son that was a brilliant shaman... then I heard that he disappeared one day with the artifact of his house.”

One of the orc warriors in the village found them and sought their understanding. “It looks like you are friends of Caburak so I’m sorry. It is because Gorit is hot-tempered. It might be dangerous now, but he will welcome you later.”

“Thank you.”

“My name is Marak. It is a pleasure.”

“Crockta. Stay alive,” greeted Crockta.

“Hoh. I didn’t know I would hear that from an outsider. Stay alive!”

He smiled and replied. Crockta’s eyes widened. There weren’t many orcs who knew this greeting in the north, and the orc warrior even extended his fist towards Crockta. Crockta bumped it with a sincere heart.

Marak laughed again. "It looks like you're not an orc of the Great Clan!"

In the end, Caburak used this as an opportunity to escape from Gorit. He opened his mouth, "Now, now. Crockta isn't from the Great Clan. Rather, he defeated people from the Great Clan and saved me. It was a big deal!"

The orcs' eyes opened. "Hoh, the warriors from the Great Clan."

"It wasn't just one but multiple warriors!"

"You must be a great warrior."

Gorit discovered Crockta, Tiyo, and Yanura.

Gorit swallowed down his anger and approached Caburak. Caburak looked into his eyes. Caburak flinched as Gorit reached out, but Gorit just placed a hand on his head. Caburak looked like a little kid.

Caburak spoke with narrowed eyes. "These are my guests."

Crockta greeted politely, "We came here after receiving Caburak's invitation. I am the orc warrior Crockta. Stay alive."

"Hoh."

Gorit looked Crockta up and down. "Are your parents from Orcheim?"

"No."

"I've never seen anyone outside of Orcheim say this greeting. Are you really not from here?"

Crockta laughed bitterly.

Then Caburak said, "Listen to my story! I traveled a long way... but... that..."

Caburak's voice gradually trailed off at Gorit's stare. He avoided eye contact. Gorit kept staring at Caburak and nodded.

"I understand but you'll have to explain it properly. We are being rude to the guests."

Follow me.”

They said farewell to Yanura who was continuing her mission, then Crockta and Tiyo were guided to Gorit’s house. As the chief, Gorit’s house was a large log cabin. It was built up so that there was a second floor. Crockta and Tiyo were taken to a guest room.

They felt the accumulated fatigue as they set down their belongings. Crockta sat on the floor with Ogre Slayer, a weapon he always carried with him. He leaned back against the wall and a sound came out.

“Ohu...”

“.....”

From then on, Tiyo stayed quiet. He was thinking about something with a sullen expression.

It seemed like he was still shocked by Yanura’s words. Tiyo was proud of gnomes. He firmly believed that gnomes were the wisest and most rational species. The magic engineering developed by the gnomes could be called the essence of civilization.

“Are you okay?”

“I’m fine *dot...*” There was no strength in his voice.

“You don’t know the situation, so don’t become too frustrated yet.”

“I don’t need to hear the situation... gnomes should absolutely never hold hands with those selling slaves *dot...*”

Crockta laughed, “So it seems like both you and I will need to hunt our own species.”

“That’s right *dot...*”

“You should sound more assertive when saying this.”

Tiyo smiled as he got up. “Thank you Crockta. But please don’t worry. I was only thinking for a moment *dot.*”

“About what?”

“How to slay those guys!”

Crockta nodded. Problems of the heart could only be solved by oneself. Tiyo would soon return to the Tiyo that Crockta knew.

“I’m going *dot*! Ohhhhhhhh!”

It seemed like he had already returned.

Then the door opened and Gorit appeared. He stared down at Crockta and Tiyo. The duo became nervous due to his fierce eyes.

“Let’s go.”

He spoke curtly, “Go where?”

“Where?” Gorit cried out in a large voice. “Isn’t a bath necessary for men to know each other? To the hot springs!”



The fatigue was resolved after soaking in the hot water.

“Ohhhh, good *dot*...”

“The best,” muttered the duo.

Gorit was sitting on the other side. The strength of his body was further emphasized by the hot spring. Despite his age, his chest muscles were bulging. Gorit scanned Crockta with a similar expression. His body was muscular and covered with tattoos. The flesh tempered from wielding his greatsword was magnificent.

“Hrmm.”

Crockta moved his gaze towards Caburak. He was a small orc. If it wasn’t for his skin color, it wouldn’t be strange for Caburak to be mistaken as a human. Caburak dropped his eyes at the gaze that seemed to rebuke his lack of a muscular body.

“It has been a long time since I’ve come to the hot spring to relieve fatigue *dot*! Thank you Gorit! Men need to bathe together!”

The most surprising one was Tiyo. He had the face of a cute gnome but his muscles were like Bruce Lee. It felt like the face of a bird being placed on a tiger.

“Huhut!”

A six pack appeared on Tiyo’s stomach! Crockta and Gorit had body fat as well as muscles, so they didn’t have such clear abs. Tiyo stretched out and posed in front of everyone. The gnome showing off his muscles in front of orcs!

“Cough!”

Gorit opened his mouth, “That gnome friend over there is good.”

“The guards of Quantes don’t neglect their training! Ohhh!”

“Quantes?”

It was an unfamiliar name. Caburak explained, “Father, they came from the south.”

“The south, do you mean the wilderness?”

“Even below that.”

Surprise appeared on Gorit’s face. There was only one place beyond the wilderness. And nobody had come from that place in a long time.

“Perhaps?”

“That south.”

“Hah...” Gorit looked at Crockta again. Unlike his previous erratic behaviour, it seemed like he was pondering something. “Somehow it seems correct. You said that you were alive.”

Crockta nodded. “Yes.”

“Do all the orcs in the south say this?”

“Of course.”

“Then you must remember the saying.”

Crockta understood what he was saying. Crockta opened his mouth and they both spoke at the same time,

“Bul’tar!”

“Bul’tar!”

The voices of the two people combined. Gorit got up. Crockta also got up. At the same time, the two bumped fists.

“Nice to meet you, Warrior Crockta!”

“Likewise, Gorit!”

Crockta finally met a real orc in the north.

Gorit asked Crockta about the south. Crockta replied carefully and sincerely. Gorit nodded at the story of the orcs on the continent. He especially formed a fist after hearing about Crockta’s mentor, Lenox.

“The orc’s soul still lives on in such a wonderful place.”

“I think so as well.”

“The north has forgotten all of this... hah... I am ashamed.”

In the north, the only place that still followed the orc’s traditions was Orcheim. Now even Orcheim was being threatened by the Great Clan. The orc who had become the great chieftain was really mad for war. He wanted to make the entire north the territory of the orcs.

“The events in the north will also affect the south.”

“What do you mean?”

“Once the southern wall is opened, that crazy chieftain won’t leave the continent alone.”

Crockta realized something.

The north would become completely opened in 10 years. The remnants of the creatures were still in the forest, but any army could go against them. Then the continent and the north would go to war.

“Maybe the great chieftain is already thinking about it. The Great Clan has recently been heating up their war preparations.”

Gorit hit the surface of the hot spring. Ripples spread out.

“You mean...”

“The time that the Great Clan started to hunt slaves and invade other tribes on a massive scale was around the time you opened the north.”

“.....!”

“There are many shamans in the Great Clan. It isn’t unusual for them to read this happening in the sky.” Gorit said with a firm expression, “The great chieftain wants to unify the north and then invade the continent.”

“.....!”

“Something strange...”

The butterfly effect.

Crockta was well aware of this. Any action he did would bring about tremendous changes that he couldn’t predict. As Jung Ian, Crockta had assassinated many people and sometimes changed the situation of the world. In the permanently sealed secret records, Jung Ian was probably the wildest butterfly in the world.

Crockta’s expression hardened. Tiyo’s face became serious. Only Caburak had an unknown smile on his face.

Gorit hit his son in an attempt to alleviate the atmosphere.

“This guy, Caburak. What were you doing all this time?”

“I did some traveling.”

“What type of trip...!” Gorit shouted. His eyes shook as he became angry again. He swallowed back his anger and whispered, “All your power has disappeared...”

“.....!”

Crockta and Tiyo looked at Caburak. Caburak just laughed while revealing his broken teeth.

“You can’t deceive me. You had much stronger blood than your mother, who is a shaman. But...”

Gorit had been very glad when Caburak came back. It wasn’t simple because Caburak was his son, but because a strong tribe member had returned. Caburak was a mighty shaman so they could resist the great chieftain threatening the north.

But now the power felt inside Caburak was at the level of a mere shaman, maybe even less.

The power of his son Caburak, who had been called a genius shaman, had almost disappeared. His magic power that was like the ocean, faded like the bowl had broken and only faint pieces were left behind.

“.....”

Caburak just smiled instead of answering. Gorit shook his head with a dark expression. Then he spoke again, “Cough! No. Something must’ve happened. I won’t ask anymore! It is enough that you came back safely.”

“Thank you.”

“Aish!” Gorit shook his head and sprang up. “I need to meet the mayor of Dejame so please enjoy this slowly.”

Then he left the hot spring alone. Crockta and Tiyo couldn’t say anything as they watched Gorit put on his clothes.

They didn’t know anything about Caburak. At first, they thought he was just an optimistic orc but he turned out to be a genius shaman. Now he was an unfortunate

man who lost all of that magic power.

But Caburak's face still looked casual. "Father is right, I lost too much. Should I tell you? Kyulkyulkyul."

"Caburak..."

"I don't care so don't worry about it."

Caburak slowly lowered his body. His body was submerged under the surface of the water, leaving only the area above his nose revealed. His eyes flashed through the vapor of the hot spring. Despite saying he was broken now, Caburak's eyes were calm and straightforward.

A strange sensation was coming from him. His eyes seemed like he was looking into the distance. Then his shoulders suddenly trembled. He was recalling the past.

Within a short period of time, Caburak's body rose up again. His pronunciation became clearer.

"I said I would show you Orcheim's Holy Land."

Crockta nodded. They stopped by here because of that in the first place.

"I couldn't tell my father but before showing you the Holy Land, I want to tell you why I lost my magic power."

"You don't have to explain..."

"No, I heard Crockta's words about the gods and realized something. That is why I have to tell you."

The two people couldn't say anything. Caburak raised a hand to the surface of the water. He stared at his hand soaked in water like it was burning.

"I saved the world."

What did that mean? Crockta and Tiyo cocked their heads in confusion.

Caburak looked at them and laughed. Then he said once again, "I risked my life to kill

a demon and saved the world.”

“.....!”

His eyes were shining. Crockta realized that Caburak was serious.

A shaman who saved the world.

Crockta nodded. Caburak had his own story. Crockta wanted to know more about this orc.

“I understand. Tell me more.”

“It is a long story so... I will tell you on the way to the Holy Land. Let’s leave. It is hot.”

“I see.”

Crockta and Caburak left the hot spring. The tough bodies of the orcs emerged from the water. But one person wasn’t seen.

“Huh?”

Crockta looked around and found Tiyo. He hadn’t risen from the hot spring where he was soaking himself.

“Tiyo?”

“Um...”

Tiyo winced. This wasn’t the dignified gnome proud of his physical appearance. “Get up first... I... slowly follow...”

“What...?”

A shy attitude like he had lost all confidence! What had made him so timid?

Crockta followed Tiyo’s gaze.

Tiyo was looking at Crockta and Caburak’s bodies and slowly lowered his gaze. He moved past the orcs’ solid chest and abdomen. Then the part of the orcs that was

shrouded by steam...

That...

Tiyo dropped his head. Crockta couldn't say anything...

"I'll go first... come slowly..."

"Thank you *dot*..."

CHAPTER 78

ORCHEIM (3)

“I have traveled around the world. I wandered to the northernmost part of the continent and saw the most beautiful lands,” Caburak said.

They walked from the hot spring towards the Holy Land of the orcs hidden deep in the forest. The ecology of the forest gradually changed. There were strange plants that he saw for the first time. The green forest gradually became white, silver and a mixture of other colors. Flowers and plants with a strange beauty that couldn't be seen anywhere else stood in front of them.

“Wasn't the land of the dark elves in the north?”

“At that time, such limits didn't apply to me. Kyulkyulkyul.” Caburak laughed.

“Did you change your appearance?” Crockta asked.

“Kyulkyul, something like that.”

It was said that changing his appearance and deceiving others was very difficult magic. Crockta nodded. Caburak was certainly a mighty shaman.

“I found an ominous presence in that place.”

Caburak recalled his memories. It was the presence of a demon. It had been sleeping a long time to regain its strength, and its power was so strong that the fallen beings of that land were raising themselves into undead.

“I asked for support from the dark elves but... they didn't believe me.”

“Um...”

“The demon was soon about to wake up. I had no choice but to get rid of it alone.”

He was a great demon who called himself the demon king. He still hadn't recovered his strength but his undead army made him the worst to face alone. If left alone, he

would be resurrected and not just the dark elves, but the orcs and most of the north would be devastated.

That's why Caburak faced him alone. He used the treasure of his family, the artifact called 'Constellation Staff', but it was destroyed during the battle.

Caburak was determined to die to stop it. He fought using everything he had. Thus, after using all his powers, he succeeded in killing the demon. The price was his magic power, the Constellation Staff and...

His life force.

"I won't be able to live for a long time... kyulkyulkyul!"

".....!"

Caburak laughed like it didn't mean anything.

"Since I lost my strength and couldn't freely move around the north like before... I tried to return to Orheim. I had just barely reached the territory of the orcs when I was captured by the Great Clan and sold as a slave. Then we met, Crockta!"

His eyes were telling the truth. Caburak omitted a lot of the story, but Crockta knew of his hard work. Caburak, the orc shaman who sacrificed his life to save the world. But his story wouldn't be remembered by anyone in history. His noble sacrifice wasn't recorded anywhere.

Now Caburak didn't look like a normal orc to Crockta. Crockta asked, "How can you laugh?"

"We're here." Caburak pointed to the front instead of answering. Crockta turned his head.

There was a cave. An unknown, refreshing feeling was felt from it. It was the opposite of the demonic energy of the Forest of Creatures.

"Something feels good *dot*."

"Kyulkyulkyul, follow me."

Upon entering the cave, Crockta felt a sense of déjà vu. Yes, it looked similar. It resembled the path that he walked towards the Hall of Fame in Orcrox. The cave was artificially cut, like someone had touched the wall.

They walked through the darkness. Caburak created a light at his fingertips to light up the way. They kept walking. Finally, there was a large space at the end of the cave.

A monument stood there.

“This...”

It was the same as the monument that had the warrior’s laws carved on it. There was writing in the ancient orc language that he couldn’t understand.

“It is a unique object from our god,” said Caburak. “We don’t believe in the gods. The Goddess of Benevolence, God of Light, God of War, etc. They aren’t gods, they are just stronger than we are.”

Tiyo nodded. Gnomes traditionally didn’t have a religion. They were usually atheists.

Caburak laughed. The sound of his low laugh rang through the space. He raised the light to reveal the words written on the monument. They were different from the warrior’s laws.

“Crockta,” Caburak called out. His eyes were clear. It was no longer Caburak’s voice.

“The world is like dust that runs into the void.”

Crockta’s eyes widened. He heard a similar story somewhere before.

“If you look at the universe, the world is empty and all living things will eventually sink into the void.”

“.....”

“Some people believe in heaven after death, but it is inevitable that they will sink downwards.”

It was the story told by the demon when Crockta obtained the Demon’s Belt. Crockta touched the belt. It didn’t respond. Caburak was talking about the same nothingness,

but his voice was somewhat gentler.

“In this tiny world, is your Bul’tar meaningful?”

“.....!”

“I killed the demon and saved the world. That was my honor. But Crockta, in a world that will sink anyway, is our clamoring meaningful? Don’t you think?”

Caburak was still laughing.

Crockta couldn’t answer. If he hadn’t obtained the Despairing Demon’s Mouth, he might not have considered his answer. But he had been infused with the idea of the voice by the Demon’s Mouth. He witnessed it, making this question too difficult. In the end, everything would die.

Caburak kept laughing as he looked at Crockta. “What do you think, Crockta?”

Crockta looked at Caburak. The face of this broken orc seemed to already have its own answer.

Crockta replied, “It doesn’t really matter.”

“Hoh.”

“No matter what meaning it has, I will do what I believe. I’ll just do what I have to. Even if it doesn’t make sense, I will walk along my own path.”

“Even if no one acknowledges you? What if no one understands, or if the world is against your beliefs?”

“It will be the same.” Crockta also laughed as he looked at Caburak. “If the road is solitary, I will be a little lonely. But that is it.”

Caburak’s expression changed. His eyes grew larger and he started to laugh out loud.

“Only loneliness... you really are an orc. Crockta.” Then he pointed to the monument. “His voice came and he looked at us. He promised us only one thing.”

Caburak cried out loudly, his voice echoing throughout the cave.

“We will look so that you aren’t lonely.”

He also heard this somewhere before. A familiar face popped into his head.

Lenox.

‘God, please acknowledge me. See that our honor won’t be lonely.’

Lenox had said this before passing on the warrior’s laws.

Caburak’s voice continued, “He who we don’t understand or can’t understand. He who builds the world and supports the world. And he who always watch us.”

Crockta and Tiyo listened. Caburak’s voice sounded like a spell in their heads.

“He who blows the wind along our back when we walk the road alone.” Caburak’s eyes turned towards the monument. “This is our god... no, our pathetic belief.”

“.....”

“I sacrificed my life to save the world. But nobody knows. If this was meaningless, how lonely would I be?” Caburak hit Crockta’s shoulders. “So I desperately hoped. Someone is watching. That is why we walk through life with a sense of honor.”

“That is the case.”

“We believe in the forgotten god of the orcs, the nameless god.”

Silence filled the space.

Tiyo spoke like he wanted to break the atmosphere.

“We are the same dot. We gnomes are atheists. One gnome said that if there is something they can’t understand, it isn’t worthy of their faith. If they couldn’t understand, there is no reason to believe in it. But we gnomes sometimes pray for salvation. Orcs are like gnomes.”

“Then Tiyo, you also believe in our nameless god. You can shout Bul’tar nicely.”

“Bah, people who preach are disgusting dot!”

“Gnomes too. Kyulkyulkyul!”

They left the Holy Land. It was called a Holy Land, but it was just a cave and monument.

He asked Caburak, “Well, the reason why... it is the only relic left by our god, so we call it the Holy Land.”

“I see.”

Crockta looked up at the sky. There was no difference from the sky in reality. If he kept on playing Elder Lord, he would forget that this is a game. Once he heard about the orc’s beliefs, he felt like this world was more realistic.

Looking at the smiling Caburak and straight-backed Tiyo, he could hardly think of them as meaningless existences. The nameless god.

As Caburak said, he was watching over them. Crockta was locked in his thoughts. And at that moment, an arrow flew out from among the bushes.

“Again?” Tiyo rolled his body and cried out like he was tired. Caburak ran towards the place where the arrow had fallen, while Crockta lowered his position and grabbed his greatsword.

“This isn’t an arrow from a dark elf.”

“Then who *dot*?” Tiyo asked.

“It is from a gnome’s crossbow.”

“What?”

Tiyo’s eyes widened. Arrows flew again. Crockta’s group flung themselves down. Then a voice was heard, “This is the Holy Land of the orcs.”

An alluring female voice. “We can get rid of all of them. Kill them all.”

Crockta looked for the source of the voice and saw a gap in the bushes. A female gnome wearing armor was commanding the unit. She was small but she looked like a beautiful woman. The gnomes followed her order and advanced quickly. They were all carrying crossbows.

“Gnomes...

Tiyo’s expression changed. He immediately seized General on his back.

“Tiyo?” Crockta called out to him but Tiyo got up from the ground and fired General towards the front.

“The ones who have forgotten the honor of the gnomes, die *dot!*”

Colorful flashes hit the gnomes. There was a rain of magic bullets and due to the small size of the species, the gnomes couldn’t endure the hit and collapsed. Other gnomes tried to aim their crossbows but Tiyo moved quickly and disturbed them.

Crockta plunged in with his greatsword whenever there was a gap.

“Be careful!”

Crockta blocked the crossbow arrows with his greatsword. The gnomes shouted and tried to reload the arrows. However, giving such a moment to an orc warrior was a precursor to a slaughter. A few gnomes held up shields and spears to stop Crockta. But it was clearly the difference between David and Goliath.

“There is a gnome with an artifact.”

The gnome commander gritted her teeth. She shouted in Tiyo’s direction, “You are a gnome! A gnome joining forces with those hostile to us, you should be ashamed!”

“Stop talking nonsense *dot!*”

Tiyo jumped up. Then Tiyo flinched and stopped as he was about to shout. He was at a loss after seeing the commander’s face.

“A tremendous beauty *dot...*”

Tiyo muttered. The commander was embarrassed.

“...S-Shut up.”

Tiyo soon regained his spirit. “I-In any case! Gnomes who are linked with trafficking slaves are shameful *dot!*”

“Bah, how old-fashioned!”

Their eyes flashed as they glared at each other. At that moment. The bush next to Tiyo started shaking. It was the enemy. A gnome soldier jumped out and aimed a spear at Tiyo.

“...Tiyo!” Crockta shouted.

The spear was heading towards Tiyo’s chest. It was only for a moment.

“Stupid child.”

Tiyo skillfully dodged the attack and placed his arm around the enemy gnome’s neck.

“...K-Keok!”

Tiyo seemed hesitant, but he soon put strength in his arms.

Crunch.

The gnome’s neck was broken and he fell down.

“.....!”

An outstanding body! Tiyo truly was like Bruce Lee.

“Hoo.”

Tiyo let go of the dead and stared up at the sky. He never killed his own people. He was a gnome of the Quantess garrison. He protected gnomes and never imagined that he would kill another gnome.

But the time had come for him to do so. He killed the gnome with his own hands.

‘We walk our lives with honor.’

He remembered Caburak’s words. Then Tiyo nodded. He would just believe as well. His path was right.

Tiyo turned his head. The gnomes flinched. In addition to the powerful artifact, they

were afraid of his ability to kill a soldier in a flash.

Tiyo met Crockta's gaze. Crockta nodded. They were eyes that seemed to understand everything. Tiyo smiled at him.

He was a reliable colleague. If so, there was nothing to hold him back.

"Let's go, Crockta!"

"Yes!"

Tiyo shouted as he rushed forward with General.

"Bul'tarrrr!"

CHAPTER 79

WILLFUL NEGLIGENCE (1)

Tiyo fired General. The gnomes simultaneously rolled to the ground. A crossbow arrow occasionally flew but Tiyo promptly avoided them. General's punishment followed towards the shooter who threatened him.

"I will kill you if you don't surrender."

Crockta said as he aimed his greatsword. The orc's terrifying momentum caused some gnomes to drop their crossbows.

"Everybody, continue to fight!"

The commander shouted. But the gnomes gradually stopped resisting. Their fear reached fever pitch when Tiyo lowered General.

"Kuaaaaak!"

"Shooting arrows towards me without being prepared *dot!*"

Tiyo indiscriminately fired magic bullets from General. The colorful light caused the bodies to shake like they were being electrocuted. The gnomes stumbled as their bodies twitched.

"Aaaack!"

A ruthless act! Gnomes began to lose their fighting spirit. The commander shouted again.

"Anybody who tries to flee is a fugitive!"

This caused a backlash with another gnome. "In the first place, it was wrong to attack them when we were just scouting!"

"Yes, just looked at the crude and rough orc warrior! We should've retreated!"

“These guys...!”

An internal schism. Crockta smiled and approached the commander. She flinched.

Other gnome soldiers stepped back. Now she was standing alone in front of Crockta. Crockta pointed his greatsword. The brutal orc warrior holding a greatsword against the small female gnome was a very unfair match-up.

The orc’s greatsword like it was going to chop her up at once. The shivering gnome pulled out a sword and pointed it at Crockta. Crockta smiled and leaned the greatsword against his shoulder.

“I will kill you if you don’t surrender.”

“.....”

She was undaunted as she clutched her sword and glared up at Crockta. Crockta also stared back. The two people continued the staring contest.

“Ohh...”

Crockta’s bloodthirsty eyes that seemed like he could kill her right now! In the end, she dropped her eyes and her greatsword.

“Understood. I-I surrender.”

“Good. Drop all weapons.”

Once she surrendered, everything became straightforward. The gnomes abandoned their weapons. Once the battle was over, Caburak appeared behind them.

Caburak approached the commanding gnome and said hello with a bow.

“It has been a long time, Yona.”

“...Caburak?” Her eyes widened as she saw Caburak. “Is it really Caburak? You were alive?”

“I just left the village for a while. I didn’t die. Kyulkyulkyul.”

They both seemed to know each other. She was going to open her mouth-

“Why are the prisoners chatting. Everybody shut up *dot!*”

Tiyo shouted. The gnomes became quiet. Yona also closed her mouth. Tiyo looked at the gnome soldiers with a bloody look on his face. He walked in front of them like an instructor dealing with army recruits, kicking their legs every time they showed disgruntlement.

But the gnomes didn't rebel. Tiyo was a ruthless person who had broken the neck of a gnome soldier at once. A villain who tortured his fellow kin!

“You have been captured *dot*. From now on, don't make eye contact with me *dot*.”

“.....”

“If you follow obediently then you won't be hit *dot*.”

Tiyo said as he walked away. The gnomes followed after him. Yona paused and followed after meeting Tiyo's intense gaze. Crockta and Caburak shook their heads as they gazed after him.

“Do you know her?” Crockta asked.

“Well... we played together a little bit when we were kids.”

“You must feel uncomfortable.”

A childhood friend had become an enemy. She wouldn't be the only gnome that he knew.

“I'm okay.” Caburak smiled and pointed to the sky. He followed his finger and looked upwards. “He is watching us.”

Crockta also smiled.



The orcs noticed when Tiyo brought the gnome prisoners to Orcheim. Tiyo made the gnomes fall to their knees in Orcheim's central square. Then he shouted like a

conqueror.

“You guys are prisoners *dot*! If you behave then there will be no more pain! But!” Tiyo turned towards Yona. “If you are rebellious, you will regret... ouch!”

Orcheim’s leader, Gorit appeared and hit Tiyo.

“Hrmm, that friend is very excited. Ignore him Yona.”

“No.”

Yona stared grimly at Tiyo standing behind Gorit. Tiyo also glared back.

Crockta watched the war of nerves between the two gnomes and suddenly recalled an old memory. It was an old memory of love. They met on the battlefield and assault rifles and rocket launchers suited her. She and Ian also fought at first like the two gnomes.

“Rude man!”

“What *dot*! You shouldn’t be so disrespectful! If you thought I would be nice because of your pretty face, you are an idiot *dot*!”

“W-What?”

Yona frowned and turned away. Tiyo became embarrassed and stammered.

“B-Bah. That was a slip of the tongue. Originally, soldiers don’t show their enemies any mercy *dot*.”

“.....”

Yona shook her head and didn’t answer. As the atmosphere flowed in a strange direction, Gorit coughed and cleared it up.

“Humm! Kuheom! Anyway, the relationship between Orcheim and the Altanas gnomes wasn’t bad in the past. But you suddenly joined hands with the Great Clan and attacked us.”

“.....”

“Many orcs from Orcheim had already been captured by the Great Clan and it is unknown if they are dead or alive. So...”

Yona dropped her head. Gorit was about to make a declaration of punishment. At that moment, Caburak interrupted.

“Father.”

“Stay out of this Caburak.”

“Now that you are in charge of this situation, let’s detain them and ask some questions.”

“The orcs of Orcheim must see the punishment...”

Gorit stared at Caburak. The appearance of the smiling idiot couldn’t be seen. This was the powerful shaman Caburak that he knew. At this time, his son seemed like a wise man.

“Umm.”

Gorit kept staring at Caburak before nodding.

“I understand. First, I will listen to their story.”

Gorit nodded at some orcs. The gnome soldiers were detained while Yona was brought aside by Gorit for a discussion.

Crockta, Tiyo, and Caburak joined as the ones who captured the gnomes. The questioning took place in Gorit’s home. Yona sat in the drawing room of Gorit’s house. There were three orcs and one gnome sitting across from her.

“Yona, what is the reason for Altanas suddenly joining hands with the Great Clan?”

“.....”

“We can’t be generous anymore if you stay silent. Even if...” Gorit had a determined expression on his face. “Even if you are the daughter of Altanas’ leader, Golito.”

Yona bit her lips. Crockta and Tiyo exchanged glances. She was a high-ranking person. Her clothing was different from the other soldiers.

“Because of you, we orcs...!”

“Calm down.” Caburak stopped Gorit. “Yona was captured due to multiple reasons.”

“What do you mean?”

Yona looked down and didn’t say anything.

“She found us and attacked first. She was only accompanied by a crossbow unit. The orc warrior Crockta was present in that place.”

“.....”

“She attacked first because she knew you before.” Gorit said while looking at Yona.

Yona shook her head. “Nonsense. You may think what you like, but I didn’t know you were there.”

“Still, what were you trying to do at night? You should’ve known that it wouldn’t have worked.”

Yona was silent. Caburak placed a hand on Yona’s face. She tried to shake Caburak off but a white light emerged from his hand. It was a healing spell to get rid of fatigue.

“It wasn’t your intention to do this. You couldn’t have foreseen these results, so this attack could be called willful negligence.”

Silence fell after Caburak’s words. Yona didn’t say anything.

Tiyo glanced at Yona with a complicated expression before clearing his throat and speaking.

“Hum hum, I’m sorry *dot*.”

Yona looked at him.

“Yes, your subordinate...”

He was referring to the one whose neck he broke. Yona shook her head. “Suddenly talking nonsense.”

Tiyo huffed at Yona's cold answer. "I-I apologize for killing your subordinate! It was very rude *dot!*"

"Bah. Okay. Then I will tell you." Yona looked at Gorit. "I am a soft female gnome being threatened by three scary orcs, so I have no choice but to tell you the information."

Gorit's eyes shone and he nodded. "That's right. We are really cruel orcs. We might have cut off your fingers and tortured you."

"Oh my. I can't bear it."

Yona smiled. Her body was small but her face was that of a beautiful woman. Tiyo couldn't take his eyes off her.

"My father is afraid."

"About what?"

"The future of the northern gnomes."

Yona touched the table with her finger. Then her hands moved like she was drawing a map.

"These are the orc, dark elves and human territories in the north. But the gnomes are scattered everywhere."

"Orcheim is the same."

"However, in the end, you are still orcs. The Great Clan can accept you at any time."

Gorrit swallowed his words.

This was true. The Great Clan opened their doors to any orcs. It was the reason why the number of orcs in Orcheim was gradually reducing. The Orcheim warriors who maintained the warriors' traditions were powerful, so any who wanted to join the Great Clan were accepted.

"My father thinks that the gnomes need a territory. And the rugged Luklan Mountains is the best place."

“Why all of a sudden? Why now?”

Gorit shouted.

The dark elves, orcs and gnomes of the Luklan Mountains had always maintained a good relationship. Despite it being a rough place, they continued to interact with each other and became close neighbors.

But things changed after the Great Clan and the gnomes joined hands. The dark elves and orcs were captured by the Great Clan. After the gnomes’ technology and knowledge of the terrain were communicated, the Great Clan pushed at them.

After this change, the Great Clan didn’t wait for Orcheim to join them like before. If they didn’t follow the Great Clan, they would become slaves. If this continued, all Orcheim orcs would become slaves.

“Hard times are coming.”

“Hard times?”

Gorit’s eyes changed. He seemed to know what she was saying.

“Soon, the north will be connected to the continent to the south.”

“.....!”

“You seem to already know this.”

“A little bit. But how can that be the reason?”

“According to the prophecy of the Great Clan’s shamans, the continent has developed significantly over the north. Population, technology, etc.” Yona sighed. “Once the two areas are open to each other, the result is obvious.”

“You can’t be sure.”

“But I can make a good prediction. Who will protect us at that time? Orcs? Dark elves?”

“So you joined with the Great Clan?”

“The great chieftain wants to unite the north in order to fight against the continent. No, the crazy chieftain wants to invade the continent. So he made an offer to my father. I’ll give you Luklan if you hand over the other species.”

Yona raised her head. Then she looked at Gorit and Caburak. The drawing room became quiet.

In the midst of the silence, Crockta opened his mouth. “All of this is due to the great chieftain.”

Everyone’s gazes gathered on him. Surprise appeared on Yona’s face.

This orc warrior was someone she didn’t know. A primitive orc warrior tattooed like this was rare in the north. In addition, the skills he showed in the previous battle indicated he was more than an average orc warrior. He was also accompanied by a gnome with an artifact.

It was strange that an orc and gnome were traveling together.

“What about the dark elves? Are they also joining the Great Clan?”

“They are still watching.”

Crockta glanced at Caburak after hearing Yona’s reply. The gazes of both people met. For a brief moment, they shared many things in their eyes. Caburak laughed. He understood the meaning of Crockta’s expression.

“Crockta. I don’t believe in destiny. But if destiny exists, perhaps the gods made it so that I met you.”

Crockta also laughed. At that moment, the door to Gorit’s house opened and an orc shouted.

“Gorit! The Great Clan has come with the Altanas gnomes! There is a huge number of them! Orcheim is in danger!”

Gorit’s eyes widened. The moment that he spoke...

Crockta jumped up. “Tiyo, we have to go to the Temple of the Fallen God.”

“That’s right *dot*.”

“But what if there are people blocking our way?” Tiyo laughed as he understood Crockta’s words. Then he replied with a smile. “Those who try to stop us will regret it.”

“Then what if a grudge is formed and we will have to fight the Great Clan?”

“We didn’t intend to do that but if it happens, it can’t be helped *dot*.” Tiyo raised General. Then he looked at Yona. “Just like this beautiful lady, it will be a willfully negligent action.”

Tiyo shrugged at Yona’s surprised expression. Crockta smiled and said.

“It is willful negligence.”

Caburak extended a fist to Crockta. The two fists touched.

Caburak could no longer feel his magic power. The current Caburak could only do low-level spells that didn’t require a lot of magic power. But Crockta felt something stronger than magic power coming from Caburak.

“I have no grudge against the great chieftain and I don’t want to fight. But...” Crockta drew his greatsword and shouted. “If the time comes for me to kill him, I will call it willful negligence.”

At this moment. The fate of the north changed.

CHAPTER 80

WILLFUL NEGLIGENCE (2)

Orcheim and Dejame were being attacked at the same time.

The warriors of the Great Clan, as well as those integrated from the lower tribes, ran in the Luklan Mountains. The momentum of their march as they carried hammers and axes was really fierce! But their breakthrough was interrupted by an orc running out of Orcheim.

“Aaaagh!”

One of the orcs tried to attack, but his body was cut in half.

The opponent kicked his head as the orc’s lower body twitched on the ground. His head had been cut off. Wearing a red headband, full body tattoos, and a greatsword, the enemy was a strange orc warrior.

It was Crockta. Now every one of his gestures was deadly.

[Status Window]

‘One who Reached the North’ Crockta, Orc Warrior.

Level: 57

Achievement Points: 245400

Assimilation: 85%

Abilities:

Peerless Mountain Seizing Strength (Pinnacle)

Regeneration Authority (Pinnacle)

Leyteno's Heart Swordsmanship (Pinnacle)

Extreme Fighting Spirit (Pinnacle)

Heart and Soul Penetration (Pinnacle)

Tattoos of War, Honour and Fighting Spirit (Pinnacle)

Army Crushing Roar of Madness (Pinnacle)

Creatures Butcher (Essence)

All of his already existing skills had reached the Pinnacle rating. After defeating the behemoth and opening the north, the system had rewarded him by raising all his Essence skills. He also got a new skill called 'Creatures Butcher'.

This gave Crockta a new perspective when fighting. The ranks of Essence and Pinnacle wasn't just a one-stage upgrade difference. It was a bigger growth than all the previous upgrades.

"Feel free to come."

Crockta was confident that he wouldn't lose to anyone here. He avoided a flying axe and cut down the enemy. He had completely grasped all the movements of the enemy and used acrobatics to avoid the enemy's attacks as he cut one neck after another. Heads flew through the air.

Someone shouted, "Who are you?"

Crockta just laughed. He was happy to oblige if they wanted to hear it.

Crockta wielded his greatsword and shouted, "My name!"

The Pinnacle ranked skill, Army Crushing Roar of Madness!

"Crocktaaaaaaaaaa—————!"

The earth shook like there was a bombardment. The blood of the enemies flowed.

Crockta shot forward like a lightning bolt after his battle shout.

“Crocktaaaaaaaaaaaaaa———!”

He cried out his name as he smashed the head of another orc. The skull fragments and blood flew into the air. The orcs that had been advancing towards Orcheim froze on the spot.

They instinctively realized. The orc standing in front of them. He was a powerhouse who could decide victory or defeat in this battle on his own.

A one-man army.

“He is like the great chieftain...”, muttered the commanding orc.

Then he shook his head. It couldn’t be. There was only one great chieftain. In order to shake off the ominous thought, he shouted at the warriors following him, “I am Akbahal, a warrior who has received the title from the great chieftain!”

Then he lifted his axe.

“Follow me! Kill that cheeky orc! For the great chieftain!”

The morale of the warriors rose as they lifted their weapons.

“Kuweeeh!”

“Great chieftain!”

“To the Great Clan!”

The orcs ran towards Crockta. Their spears and swords aimed at Crockta. The crossbows of the gnomes in the rear also aimed to turn the orc into a beehive. Crockta swung his greatsword and blocked them all at once.

“Die!”

His defense broke and Akbahal and the orcs aimed at Crockta. Dozens of weapons were locked on Crockta.

Kakang!

The greatsword blocked it. The fight between the orcs and Crockta continued. The orcs' eyes widened as they felt themselves being pushed back, despite the numerical advantage. Whenever Crockta took a step, they had to step back.

Peerless Mountain Seizing Strength! Crockta swung his weapon with great strength. He aimed for all the orcs at once. The bizarre giant greatsword, Ogre Slayer fell over their heads.

Puok!

Puok!

Flesh and bone fragments flew in the air. The warrior Akbahal hastily threw himself back. It was ridiculous. Akbahal clenched his teeth and rose to his feet. The orc called Crockta was walking towards him. His eyes saw the weapon and his vision dimmed.

Akbahal's head flew in the air.

"Oh my god!"

A terrifying monster that killed Akbahal with one blow! The morale of the soldiers plummeted after Akbahal's death. Every time Crockta moved, another orc soldier died. The orcs kept falling back.

Suddenly, Crockta stopped moving forward. The clan warriors sighed with relief and used the chance to catch their breaths.

Crockta laughed. The battle wasn't over because he stopped. Behind Crockta, the warriors of Orcheim ran out. Their morale had risen to the sky after witnessing Crockta's force.

"Waahhhh————!"

The battle cries of Orcheim's warriors rang through the Luklan Mountains. Crockta watched as they broke through the helpless Great Clan warriors.

Orcheim was completed. Next was Dejame.

Crockta started running. His physical abilities far exceeded his previous left after gaining Peerless Mountain Seizing Strength and Regeneration Authority. His muscles were filled with a tremendous strength, and it felt like he was flying. His stamina wasn't exhausted.

In an instant, he reached a ridge. The dark elf village Dejame was below him. Numerous orcs surrounded the village. There was a battle between the invading orcs and the dark elves trying to stop them.

Arrows rained down on the invaders but the defenses were gradually being shaken by the orcs' offensive.

Crockta took a deep breath. Air was condensed inside his body. Crockta gave strength to his abdomen. His diaphragm became as hard as steel. His roar rattled the Luklan Mountains.

"Bul'tarrrrrrrrrrr————!"

His roar halted the orcs and dark elves. The battlefield fell into a moment of panic. Crockta smiled and leaned towards Dejame. His thighs swelled like they were going to burst. His body soon burst out.

Every time he pushed against the ground, the landscape passed by in a flash.

It was a tree. It was a rock. Tree. Rock. Tree. Tree. Tree.

And the enemy. Ogre Slayer split the enemy's flesh asunder, causing a fountain of blood to erupt with every flash of its blade.

"Uhweeeh!"

"W-What is going on?" The orcs still didn't understand the situation as they yelled. Crockta was kind enough to explain it to them.

"I am the warrior Crockta! You who have invaded the Luklan Mountains!"

Two orcs blocked his way. Ogre Slayer slaughtered the two orcs because they could use their weapons. Limbs flew into the air.

"All of you will die!"

Dejame was surprised by the sudden emergence of an orc warrior. The commander of Dejame grasped the situation and ordered his soldiers to shoot.

“I’m the reinforcements from Orcheim, so don’t shoot!”

The dark elves couldn’t believe their eyes. “There’s only one person for reinforcement?”

“No matter how the orcs...!”

But the situation was reversed due to one orc crushing the enemies. The orcs surrounding Dejame started to slowly thin out as if they were swallowed by a beast. Dejame’s commander, Janaru watched from the highest spot and gulped.

“It is a sight that is hard to believe...”

The orcs who climbed the barrier and the ones who resisted were all killed by the greatsword. Everywhere he passed, a terrible fountain of blood would spurt out.

After Crockta joined the fight, the dark elves regained their numerical advantage. Now the dark elf warriors rushed out of the barriers to wipe out the rest. They used rapiers and arrows to remove the orcs.

“Hoo. Hoo.”

Crockta took deep breaths. There were dead bodies all around him.

He looked up at the sky. Memories of the wars he experienced were superimposed over it. He had been tired of the cruel battlefield, but now he was once again standing over it.

“If you don’t kill, you will die.”

There was the corpse of a dark elf at his feet. The eyes were blank as he was already dead. Crockta closed the elf’s eyes. He always asked himself the same question. Still, there was no answer.

‘Is this the right thing?’

He didn’t know.

‘Is it fair?’

He didn’t know.

However, he could only do what he believed.

“I-I, I received the title of warrior from the great chieftain.”

“Is that right?”

“If you kill me, you will surely be slain by the Great Clan and its chief. If you let me go then I will...”

Crockta raised his head. He saw an orc looking at him. The hand in his armor was shaking. His eyes were distorted by fear. Crockta started laughing. It was a pitiful sight for an orc warrior to be begging for his life, instead of maintaining the pride of the great chieftain.

“You will surely become the target of the great chieftain if you kill me.”

“I see.”

“That’s right. So...”

Ogre Slayer cut off his words. The head of the last Great Clan warrior flew in the air.

“Then it can’t be helped.”



Another victim was thrown into the Colosseum. There were five orcs, four dark elves, and two humans. One gnome. The majority of them were carrying weapons, but there was no fighting spirit in their eyes.

He looked up. His men were pushing down several more orcs and dark elves. They rolled on the dirt ground before rising to their feet.

But their eyes were still frightened. They grabbed their weapons and slowly moved backward. Was it still insufficient?

He threw away his axe. Now he was bare-handed.

“Win your freedom.”

There was hope in a few eyes. He laughed. His prey found a ray of hope and raised their weapons towards him. It made no difference if he tore them apart with his bare hands or with a weapon. The prey exchanged glances with each other. They arranged themselves in a battle formation. The orcs were in front, the dark elves in the rear and the humans and gnomes between them.

How pitiful. Such things were useless in the face of an overwhelming power difference.

Then the prey rushed at him.

“Waaaah!”

“Kuaaaak!”

The orcs gave a battle cry.

He smiled and stomped his foot. The earth shook from the tremendous power. The orcs stopped like their feet were tangled together.

He roared. “Kiyaaaaaaaaaaaaack!”

It was a terrible scream, a roar that seemed to tear at the ears and souls of those who heard it. Within a short time, he was moving forward. The difference in weight became clearer. The orcs looked up at him blankly.

He looked down at them and laughed. Then he swung his fists. They tried to resist, but his fists smashed their weapons and crushed their skulls. Bits of brain and red blood were scattered on the ground of the Colosseum. He stepped on the dead bodies and moved forward.

Now the prey were fearful again. Their eyes were panic stricken. It was a desperate reminder that their lives were no longer theirs. It was a mix of helplessness and violence.

It was his favorite sight.

The dark elves fired their arrows. He waved his arm with annoyance and the arrows fell after hitting his forearms.

He grabbed the head of an orc in the front and lifted him up. The orc desperately swung the axe but it got stuck on his hard skin. He gave strength to his hands. The orc turned red then blue as blood gradually rose.

The orc's skull exploded.

"Boring," he muttered.

Now there was only fear in the prey's eyes. They chose complete despair over helplessness and violence. Their willpower disappeared.

He charged. The prey thrashed in horror. Neither arrows or axes harmed him. He crushed the orcs in turn. Tearing off their limbs and piercing their bellies. He grinned at those who were waiting for their turn.

Within 20 minutes, all the people close to him had been turned into gory corpses. It was a cruel image where internal organs and limbs were mixed together, making it impossible to know which part belonged to who.

At that moment, his subordinate approached. "Did you have enough fun?"

"It is insufficient."

He had an overwhelming body that was twice the size of regular orcs. He was the great chieftain, leader of the Great Clan who ruled over the northern orcs, Calmahart.

"The war has yet to come." His subordinate returned the axe to him.

He continued, "It will be opening soon. All the orcs are gathered under the banner of the Great Clan and the Luklan Mountains will soon be dealt with."

"Hammerchwi has returned."

"That..." Calmahart glanced over. His subordinate was nervous. "Hammerchwi and all the warriors have returned injured."

"....."

“According to Hammerchwi, he met an orc from the continent...”

Calmahart took his axe. “The continent?”

“Yes.”

“From below the border?”

“Yes.”

“Kukuk...” Calmahart laughed. “How interesting. Where is Hammerchwi now?”

“He is being treated by a shaman.”

“Let’s go.”

“Yes.”

The subordinate followed Calmahart. He was a large orc but he looked like a small child standing next to the great chieftain.

The subordinate asked, “What should we do with the rest of the slaves?”

Calmahart stopped.

At the back of the Colosseum, there were some slaves waiting for their turn. They had been gathered to sate Calmahart’s thirst for blood. Like those who were killed earlier, they were originally destined to face Calmahart in the Colosseum.

Their gazes turned towards Calmahart. Fear mixed with hope in their eyes.

“My excitement has cooled down.”

“Then...”

“Release them.”

“I understand.”

The faces of the slaves brightened. And at that moment.

Calmahart threw his axe. The axe tore through the air towards them. The axe split apart the orcs and gnomes standing in a line. The line of orcs, dark elves and humans were literally cut in half.

A feast of blood occurred.

Calmahart added, "If they survived."

He turned around.

"...Hiccup!"

The gnome standing at the far end was pale as he stared at his severed hair.

CHAPTER 81

STRANGER (1)

The orcs invading the Luklan Mountains retreated. Most of them died or returned with terrible injuries. Crockta's name was stamped into the northern orcs. Now he was obviously an enemy of the Great Clan.

"Golito."

A gnome with a long beard stood in front of Gorit. It was Golito, the leader of Altanas.

Golit of Orcheim, Janaru the leader of Dejame, Crockta and Tiyo were gathered in Altanas. The disarmed gnomes lowered their heads but Golito glared sharply at Gorit.

"Gorit." Golito puffed up his chest. "There is nothing more to say. Dispose of me."

"Are you sorry towards the many who have died because of your actions?"

"That would be a lie. I don't regret it."

The orcs and dark elves surrounding Golito cursed at him. Due to Golito's decision, the Luklan Mountains had been covered with blood. However, Golito still maintained his dignity.

"Once the border opens, the gnomes will clearly be in a crisis. It is fate so I was just trying to do what I could for us gnomes."

"Due to your anxiety, the blood of numerous people were shed."

"My anxiety? Can't you see it? The destruction of our world in the war is right in front of us!"

"That is a leap!"

"No! You underestimate the situation! No matter what the situation over the border is, the crazy chieftain has already decided on a war. Soon the dark elves and you orcs will fall into slavery. When the time comes, Orcheim can just be incorporated into the

Great Clan. But us?"

He looked at Janaru, the leader of the dark elves. "It is the same for you too! You are just foolish elves!"

"Shut up."

"Don't turn away from this. The world is already on the verge of war. Janaru, you should think about this if you really care about Dejame. Whether it is fighting against your fellow people or selling them to the great chieftain, you should plan your future! Why don't you understand this?"

Golito argued with wild eyes.

"As long as the Great Clan has decided on war, the gnomes will be destroyed! This world is about the survival of the fittest! All I did was try to live! I will never regret my decision! Who can blame me? Then blame me!"

There was silence at Golito's strong sincerity. No one could blame him.

At that moment. Someone struck Golito.

"Cough!"

The person was Tiyo. "Stupid bastard!"

Golito touched his cheek where he was hit and raised his head. The culprit was a gnome he hadn't seen before.

"Who are you?"

"My name is Tiyo! I am a rational gnome who was the captain of Quantess Gnomes Garrison and I can't stand such stupid words *dot*."

"Quantess?"

"That's right *dot*." Tiyo raised General to his shoulder and cried out. "I have come over the border from the continent with Crockta *dot*!"

Golito's eyes widened at the declaration. There was a commotion in the surroundings.

“But where I come from doesn’t matter *dot*. I just wanted to tell you that you are someone who has lost the cool judgement of a gnome. You are a stupid gnome *dot!*”

“What?”

“Anxiety based on fear will just proliferate. That is why us gnomes always look objectively. But you are a stupid gnome who lost your composure due to fear! No, you are just a stupid person *dot!*” Tiyo declared. He was more confident than he had ever been.

“B-Bullshit!”

“Think about it! If, as you say, the great chieftain has turned to madness, do you think his peace with you will last forever?!”

“Surviving the catastrophe in front of us is more important than the distant future! Survival is a priority!”

“That is why you are stupid *dot!* Gnomes who only think about one thing is a gnome who has lost their reasoning to fear!” Tiyo was speaking to the other gnomes as well as Golito. The gnomes avoided the intensity in his eyes. “Guys like you are under the illusion that you are doing something important! You become confident after feeling like you’ve made a big decision, but that is just a delusion *dot!* Poor man, you are really poor *dot!*”

Golito’s eyes distorted at Tiyo’s words. “If so, what should I do? We gnomes...!”

“Your reasoning *dot!*” Tiyo shouted. “Don’t ask me, ask your sense of reason!”

“I am rational...!”

“You are asking the fear that is eroding your heart. Listen to the answer from your reasoning, not your fear *dot!*”

Tiyo brought up the essence of magic engineering. “Then I’ll ask you again Golito! The answer! Is it selling your old friends, making other species into slaves and cowardly joining hands with the crazy orc who knows nothing but war?! And!”

Tiyo shouted towards all the gnomes in Altanas. “Resisting evil deeds to the end, isn’t that the reason why we follow ‘ein guter Wille’?”

“.....!”

Golito's eyes widened. This gnome, he was shouting in the ancient gnome language that was no longer remembered. Everybody knew it but they ignored the old stories.

“How is it Golito? What do you grey brain cells say?”

Golito couldn't open his mouth. He also knew it. But he had been afraid of the destruction that would come, afraid of the death of his own people. He just wanted to stop the destruction of the gnomes living in Altanas.

Golito dropped his head. Then someone responded on behalf of Golito.

“You are an outsider so you can speak easily.” Tiyo turned his head. It was Golito's daughter, Yona.

As Tiyo stared at her, Yona also faced him. The gazes of the two met.

Yona laughed. Tiyo looked embarrassed by her sudden laugh.

“And you can speak correctly because you are an outsider.”

Golito looked at his daughter. “Yona.”

“Father, I respect your will. You made the decision for our people. But the gnomes of Altanas and I aren't so weak. We can fight.”

“.....”

Yona looked back at the gathered gnomes. “If we bow down to the Great Clan, we will be the same as them. Father, you always told me. No, you said this to all gnomes, not just me.”

“Yona...”

“Rather than being full pigs, let's be hungry gnomes.”

The gnomes of Altanas nodded. It was an old saying passed down to the gnomes.

Crockta made a strange expression as he watched the gnomes. As he listened to the

conversation between Tiyo and the gnomes, familiar words rang in his ears. There were words and sentences that he read in philosophical books during his breaks in the army.

Was this really a game that reflected the tastes of the makers, or was Elder Lord connected to a real world? He didn't know.

As Crockta thought this, Golito was lamenting.

"I see..."

"Yes."

"Yona you, and everyone else's will..."

Golito looked around at the gnomes. They nodded. The gnomes respected Golito but they also questioned his decision.

Golito sighed. "I'll acknowledge my misjudgement."

Gorit tied Golito up and spoke. "You are in custody. For the crime of betraying your neighbors in the Luklan Mountains..."

The gnomes were nervous. Gorit exchanged glances with the dark elf Janaru. Gorit declared.

"There were be no hostile actions under the agreement that a new leader sits down with us and joins forces with Orcheim and Dejame to protect our home from the Great Clan."

".....!"

The gnomes were shocked by the exceptional concession. The tied up Golito looked between Gorit and Janaru. Gorit just laughed. "Don't be too surprised. As our gnome friend from the continent said, I made the decision using my reasoning."

"...I see."

"But there were many sacrifices. So you will need to apologize and prepare reparations for them, as well as make efforts to reclaim those sold as slaves."

“I accept.”

It was an amicable ending. As Crockta watched, he suddenly recalled a sentence from a philosopher. He was somehow captured by the idea of the great sight that would occur if he spoke those words now.

‘I will. I won’t.’

He hesitated over whether he should say it or not.

“As an outsider watching this, I suddenly had a thought.” Crockta was filled with a burning desire and opened his mouth. Everyone’s gazes focused on Crockta.

“As I think about it, there are two things that fill my heart with every increasing admiration and awe.

“.....?”

“One is the stars shining in the sky above me and the other... Crockta paused and everyone focused on him. “It is the moral law within us that tells us the way to walk.” (TL: Paraphrased from philosopher Immanuel Kant, in *Critique of Practical Reason*)

An outright imitation! Crockta opened his eyes and looked around.

“.....!”

The people in the surroundings were looking at him with awe. Tiyo’s mouth fell open.

“I-I thought you were just an orc good at fighting but...”

“Such an intellectual sentence...”

“Unbelievable... coming from an orc...!”

“What a wonderful verse that contrasts nature with the human nature...!”

Crockta closed his eyes. Then he smiled widely.



Crockta and Tiyo prepared to leave Orcheim.

They had experienced the orc's Holy Land and ended the dispute in the Luklan Mountains. Now it was time to leave. Gorit, Caburak and many orcs saw them off.

"Crockta, thank you and sorry for giving you more baggage. Good luck."

Caburak said.

Crockta was now heading towards the Temple of the Fallen God. However, it was in the territory of the dark elves.

Crockta had made an enemy of the great chieftain. No matter how strong he was, he couldn't deal with all of the Great Clan alone. So Crockta would head to the Temple of the Fallen Gods and also try to persuade the dark elves, one of the two peoples in the northeast to oppose the Great Clan.

Gorit held Crockta's shoulder and nodded.

"The dark elves aren't easy because they are closed off. Our Luklan Alliance will keep sending messengers so you don't have to bear all of the burden. Good luck."

Orcheim, Dejame, and Altanas had joined together in one alliance.

Crockta nodded. The warriors of Orcheim who fought with Crockta wished him good luck and extended their fists. Crockta bumped fists with numerous warriors.

"I will surely return *dot*." Tiyo's voice was heard. Crockta turned to see Tiyo talking to Yona.

"Bah. Whether you return or not..."

"If you don't give a definitive answer then I will just return home. I am a straightforward man *dot*. If I am in your heart then tell me now."

Tiyo said without hesitation. Crockta felt admiration towards him.

Tiyo was a real man.

At his mighty request, Yona avoided his gaze and replied in a small voice.

“...Stop by when everything is finished.”

Tiyo laughed. “I understand *dot*. Wait for me.”

There was another piece of good news.

Tiyo received a clue on his father’s whereabouts. Tiyo asked the gnomes of Altanas while giving his name and description. Yona and the other gnomes told him about his father. It was said that he carried mysterious goods and drifted around the north.

The last time they saw him was a few years ago when he was heading towards the area of the dark elves to the north.

Thus, Crockta and Tiyo left the Luklan Mountains.

“It feels like everything is in the north *dot*.”

The Temple of the Fallen God.

The Great Clan’s war.

Tiyo’s father.

All the answers were there.

“How about it Crockta? Are you confident about the future?”

“Of course!”

Crockta grinned.

There were no users in the north. However, this was the place where Crockta had felt the freest. Everything meshed together like cogwheels without any discomfort. Every single person that he met here was living their own lives.

Crockta liked this world. Maybe the users barging into Elder Lord had created debris.

“What is that animal *dot*?” Tiyo asked.

Just before they completely left the Luklan Mountains, they saw the creature tanding in the middle of the forest.

It looked like a lizard but it had wings. He thought it was a dragon but it didn't have the majesty of one. However, the body was big and the eyes wild. Flames were emerging from between its snout.

"Isn't that a drake?"

"Drake!"

It was a powerful flying monster inferior to a dragon, but much stronger than a wyvern. The drake started to come towards them, emitting threatening flames.

Crockta and Tiyo exchanged glances.

"Are you confident ,Tiyo?"

"Of course *dot*."

They laughed, raising their weapons and rushing towards the drake. It was a world where he didn't know when something unexpected would happen! Crockta felt a burning sensation in his chest as he jumped.

"Events without notice are welcome!"

The drake shot its flames towards Crockta. However, his greatsword split the flames apart. The drake's terrible face came closer. As Ogre Slayer was descending towards the drake's head,

"What are you doing to Third Dragonnnnnn!" shouted someone from behind them.

The moment that Crockta hesitated. The drake slammed its forehead into Crockta. Crockta flew through the air and landed on the ground. His ribs were aching. He could taste blood in his mouth.

"Kuheok! A-Are you okay? Third Dragon! Why did you do that?"

Crockta sat on the ground and laughed.

Look, he really didn't know when something would happen.

CHAPTER 82

STRANGER (2)

The drake named Third Dragon unhappily looked down on Crockta, who returned the glare without any hesitation. An orc and drake were having a staring competition.

The dark elf Anor, who appeared with Third Dragon, intervened between the two of them. “Haha, why are you doing this? There was a misunderstanding, but you can get along now. Isn’t that right? Right, Third Dragon?”

“Grrrrr...”

“Urrrrung...”

“No, Mister Orc, why are you growling?”

“I’m not.”

“Huh?”

“Urrrrung!” Tiyo made a ferocious sound from the rear.

“That... gnome?”

“Urrrrung!”

“Excuse me...”

“It’s okay! I am imprinting with the beast *dot*.”

“Beas... t?” It seemed more like he was the beast. Anor shook his head. “Excuse me.”

Crockta and Anor backed away from the drake and the gnome.

“I am alive. I am Crockta. I’m heading north.”

“Yes, yes. I am Anor. That friend over there is Third Dragon.”

“It’s amazing that you’re friends with a drake.”

“Huh? Amazing? No, what are you saying? Hahahahat! No, no. Yihihit! Crockta is funny!”

It seemed like this man liked compliments more than Crockta thought.

“Are you a dark elf from Dejame?”

“No. I’m originally from Nuridot, but I came down for a while because of Third Dragon. I was surprised to see orcs from the Great Clan two days ago.”

Nuridot was the closest dark elf city to here. Anor noticed his expression and added, “Is Crockta from the Great Clan?”

“No.”

“I see.” Anor seemed to think he was from Orcheim because he came down from the Luklan Mountains. “How are the Luklan Mountains? Is it great to live there?”

“It is a good place.”

“Then... Third Dragon can live here well right?”

His last words felt somewhat lonely. Crockta turned towards Anor. He was looking at Third Dragon with sad eyes.

“Third Dragon originally lived in the forest north of Nuridot... there are a lot of drakes there.”

“Then why did you come here?”

“That...”

Thanks to the psychological warfare with Tiyo, Third Dragon spread his wings and slowly started to fly upwards. Third Dragon’s wings were large and wide.

“Third Dragon was harassed by those drakes.” There was an abundant gust of wind from Third Dragon’s wings. The wide wings resembled a wyvern more than a drake.

“Third Dragon is a mix between a wyvern and a drake.”

A monster hybrid! Third Dragon soared into the sky and roared.

Tiyo walked over triumphantly. "Look, the drake eventually ran away!"

"....."

It seemed more like the drake was tired and wanted to ignore him, but Tiyo had a very confident expression on his face.

"So, what serious story are you talking about over here? I will solve all your worries *dot!*"

"....."

Anor didn't believe it but in the end, he talked about Third Dragon.

He had accidentally met a young Third Dragon in Nuridot Forest. Third Dragon was a mixture of a drake and wyvern. He learned that Third Dragon was being harassed. He was similar but different to them, meaning the drakes didn't acknowledge him.

As Third Dragon grew, his wings became bigger and the harassment of the violent drakes became worse. Now Anor was the only friend Third Dragon could rely on. Anor didn't like it and decided to bring him to Luklan Mountains where there were no drakes.

"What *dot?* Where are the ones who harassed him *dot!*"

Tiyo looked at Third Dragon flying in the sky. It was as though he couldn't stand that someone he acknowledged was being ignored.

"You made a mistake Anor *dot.* That drake isn't a guy who will run away!"

"Excuse me..."

"That guy, I will fix it *dot!* A man can overcome anything with a strong will!"

Tiyo started to preach a philosophy that was unique to him. Anor ignored him and looked at Crockta.

"Where are you going in the north?"

“Nameragon.”

Nameragon was the city of dark elves in the north that was in contact with the Temple of the Fallen God. It was the next most flourishing city after Spinoa, the capital of the dark elves where the world tree was located.

“It will be difficult... I am a dark elf but, the dark elves are closed off. They won’t easily accept an orc.”

“It’s okay. I am prepared.” Crockta shrugged. There was no way, but he would see once he got there.

Anor sighed, “Dark elves are overly hostile to strangers.”

The flying Third Dragon landed on the ground again. Third Dragon approached Anor and cried out. Crockta and Tiyo didn’t know what he was saying, but Anor nodded like he understood the meaning.

Anor spoke with a serious expression. “Wandering orcs have been seen. However, they are holding the flag of the Great Clan...”

Wandering orcs were similar to the Kapur Tribe, but they were small-scale and drifted around. The lack of a base meant they survived by robbing people. Recently, the Great Clan accepted orcs at random so even the thieving orcs joined them.

To a small city like Nuridot, even a small group of orcs was a big threat.

“What do we do?”

“Those guys are heading to Nuridot?”

“Yes.”

Crockta and Tiyo exchanged glances.

“Huhuhut! A crisis is an opportunity! We will help the dark elves *dot!*”

Crockta also nodded. “Good.”

In the past, he raised his reputation in order to enter the elven city of Arnin. If the dark

elves didn't let them in, they would do something wonderful to impress them.

"Let's go *dot!*"

"Yes!"

Crockta and Tiyo's eyes shone like they wanted to run at once.

Anor blocked them. "Excuse me, wait a minute!"

"Huh?"

"Nuridot is a long way from here! It will take all day..."

Crockta and Tiyo just laughed. "You can go slowly. We'll go ahead and will be waiting."

"Huh?"

Then Crockta leaned down towards the ground. Tiyo jumped up and grabbed Crockta's neck. His two legs twisted together and he held on firmly to Crockta's chest.

"Crockta, ready!"

"I'll go first!"

Crockta carried Tiyo and started running towards the north. Anor stared at their backs blankly.

Crockta took advantage of his physical abilities and quickly escaped from the Luklan Mountains. He passed through the forest and onto a plain.

Tremendous speed!

Tiyo started firing General behind him. The colourful flashes of light caused a long trail along Crockta's path. It was like the brilliant tail of a comet.

Tiyo cheered. "Kiyooooooooo!"

Suddenly, Crockta shouted, "Tiyo!"

“What is it?”

“If you want to cheer me up, then please shoot in front of me! If you shoot behind, I can’t see the cool rays of General!”

“.....!” At that moment, Tiyo flinched. “C-Crockta...”

“Huh?”

“This isn’t to cheer you on... and if I shoot forward...” Tiyo asked hesitantly. “Perhaps... do you not know about action-reaction...?”

“.....!”

He had heard that term a lot, but what did it have to do with the situation now? But it was enough to make Tiyo dismissive of him.

Crockta muttered bitterly, “I know...”

In any case, Crockta was able to reach Nuridot more quickly with the boost from General. The city of dark elves gradually became clear. Once there, they found dark elves confronting the wandering orcs.

Crockta slowed down.

“We are here, Crockta.”

The dark elves and wandering orcs turned their attention to the duo. There were confused expressions on their faces. The sudden appearance of a fierce looking orc carrying a gnome!

Everyone staring blankly at him. Crockta coughed. Now it was time to think about a great line. A saying that would cause a reaction similar to Altanas! Crockta recalled that moment and imagined experiencing it twice.

“What, who is this jerk?” said a rogue orc.

“.....!”

Before the shocked Crockta could respond, the other orcs laughed and sneered.

“Yes, he is even carrying a gnome. Is this orc serving the gnome?”

“An orc being a mule, how shameful.”

“Look at the red headband and tattoos, how old-fashioned.”

“He must think it is cool. Look, he is crying. Kuahahahat!”

Crockta’s fists shook. He could tolerate other things, but not someone making fun of his fashion sense.

Greatsword, greatsword.

Tiyo felt his anger through his trembling shoulders and advised the orcs.

“Getting Crockta angry, you will regret it!”



Anor was able to reach Nuridot after a long walk. The sun had already started to set. Fortunately, there seemed to be no problems with the orcs. The town was peaceful.

As Anor headed to the entrance, drunk guards greeted him.

“Uh, Anor. Where are you going?”

“.....”

“I thought you finally ran away. You have no guts.”

Anor shut his mouth and walked through the entrance. He could hear the guards laughing behind him. This didn’t change even after entering the village. Every time Anor passed a dark elf, he could feel their unpleasant gazes on his back.

Anor suddenly wanted to see Third Dragon. But Third Dragon was already left in the Luklan Mountains. Anor muttered.

“How are yo...”

As he walked through the streets, he suddenly heard a noise from the town square. He

wondered if there was an event, but a familiar voice rang out loudly.

“We protect our beautiful Quantas~ Gnome Garrison~ live with ~ today ~!”

It was a lousy song. Originally, he would’ve just passed by but Anor was drawn by the familiar voice.

“Bathe in the blood of creatures ~!”

The voice sounded like a child but a manly impression was coming from the speaker. A drunk gnome was running rampant in the town square. The town’s dark elves were clapping around him. He could see an orc with a red headband among the dark elves.

It was Crockta and Tiyo, whom he had met in the daytime.

“What...?”

Anor couldn’t believe the sight in front of him. The dark elves were closed off. They didn’t like strangers. The dark elves didn’t open their hearts to people who were different, even if they were born in the same town. But they were treating these strangers like old friends.

“The beautiful dark elf girl over there! Do you like gnomes?”

“Oh my?”

“I would’ve dashed over if you were one metre tall, but too bad!”

“Huhuhu.”

The dark elves burst out laughing at Tiyo’s joke. Anor had thought that they wouldn’t be able to pass the dark elves’ area and reach Nameragon. It was due to the isolation of the dark elves that he felt himself. But they had quickly entered dark elf society while Anor hit a wall.

“Great...”

Anor muttered. But he wasn’t feeling genuine admiration. Rather, it was the opposite. Anor suppressed it and whispered ‘great’ again. However, he couldn’t help feeling jealous.

“Hey, halfie,” called out a dull voice from behind him.

Anor sighed and turned around. A dark elf male with a well-tempered body like a dark elf looked at Anor and laughed. A group of young dark elves were following him.

“Your face is especially white today. Your ears are also reduced right?” He smiled. The other dark elves laughed at Anor. “If this continues, you will die after 100 years.”

“How old if the halfie right now?”

Anor glared at them. But none of the dark elves were scared of him. Anor turned back around.

“Where are you going Anor?”

“Go away, mongrel.”

That’s right. Anor was a half elf, a mixture of a human and dark elf. That’s why he was persecuted in dark elf society. He ignored the taunts from behind him and stepped away. Someone called to him again.

“Anor!”

He tried to ignore it, but the voice was different. It was very big and loud. He turned his head and saw the orc warrior Crockta approaching.

“You are alive! Did you arrive just now?”

As the sun went down, the shadows cast over Crockta’s face made him look more vicious. Crockta greeted him with pleasure before looking between Anor and the dark elf group.

“Oh, Anor’s friends. It is a pleasure.”

Anor flinched.

The dark elves, including the leader Nakai, were especially prominent among the dark elves who didn’t like strangers. Anor had been harassed for being a half-blood, despite being born and raised here.

Problems might arise...

Nakai's voice interrupted his thoughts.

"Oh, orc warrior! Welcome. Hahahaha."

Nakai seemed glad to shake hands with Crockta.

CHAPTER 83

ALIVE (1)

“Oh, orc warrior! It’s nice to meet you. Hahahaha.”

“Are you alive? I am called Crockta.”

Nakai greeted him with a smile. Crockta laughed and nodded.

Anor felt strange as he watched the two greet each other. He was captivated from the unreal scene that seemed to be separate from the rest of the world. Obviously, they met for the first time today.

The Nakai he knew would’ve mocked and expressed dissatisfaction towards other species entering Nuridot. He was always the one who kept spouting the rhetoric that orcs were dirty and ignorant.

So why were they now shaking hands like this?

“Uh, it is Anor! How is Third Dragon?”

Tiyo approached. Nakai looked down at Tiyo and asked for a handshake.

“You seem like a dark elf with manners. I am Tiyo *dot*,” replied Tiyo with a smile.

Nakai originally called gnomes ‘little dwarves.’ Now it seemed like Anor was the only one not properly connected to Nuridot. Anor turned around with a bitter expression.

Before he knew it, the sun had completely sunk below the horizon. The twilight sky was covered with the veil of night. Once again, the moon took to the sky.

Anor trudged towards his house.

He felt it was unfair as he thought about all the times he had been persecuted. He might’ve been a half-blood, but at least he resembled a dark elf with his dark skin and long ears. The orc and gnome had completely different appearances.

However, they were welcomed. Maybe it wasn't because he was a half-blood, but Anor's existence itself? That was the only conclusion he could come to.

He stopped moving as someone suddenly grabbed his shoulder. Anor panicked. He turned around and saw a face that he knew, causing him to become even more frightened. Crockta's rough face could be seen in the darkness.

"Y-You surprised me!"

"It seems like there are no inns around here." Nuridot wasn't a very big place. In the first place, the dark elves weren't very accepting of outsiders, so lodging businesses weren't very common. "So I've decided to stay at your house."

"I never gave permission..."

"That's why I came. To ask you. Kulkulkul."

Anor scratched his head. His house wasn't very spacious and wasn't fit to welcome guests. Rather, it was shameful to show to others. But he felt nervous about being stared at by Crockta.

"Then..."

The moment he looked up at Crockta to tell him to come along...

Something flew over Crockta's head.

"...Eh?"

The shadow of a dragon shone from the light of the full moon behind Crockta's head. No. It wasn't a dragon. It resembled a dragon, but wasn't a dragon. It resembled a drake, but it wasn't a drake. It was drake with the wings of a wyvern, Third Dragon.

"Third Dragon?"

He had obviously released Third Dragon into the Luklan Mountains. Anor asked him to live freely without coming back. He firmed up his heart and moved away from Third Dragon. So why was Third Dragon flying about Nuridot? Third Dragon was heading north towards Nuridot Forest, the habitat of the drakes.

“Eeit!”

Anor started running. Crockta and Tiyo stared at his receding back before gazing at each other. They chased after him.



“Why are you back?”

Third Dragon glanced over at Anor, who had his arms folded over his chest.

“You’ll be harassed again by the other drakes here.”

Shake shake.

Third Dragon shook his head. His intentions were clear.

Crockta and Tiyo watched him from behind.

“Hey! Are you going to live with this harassment all your life? Go back and make other friends! Eh! You are just a little bigger! So live!”

“Grrrrung.”

“Ahh, what are you saying?”

Anor hit his chest with frustration. Crockta approached and said, “Anor, give him a moment.”

“Huh?”

Crockta grabbed the back of Anor’s neck and tugged him backward.

“Eek?”

As soon as he was dragged back, a fire flashed around Third Dragon. It was a fire breath that illuminated the dark forest.

“.....!”

Third Dragon spread his big wings in an instant. The breath was blocked by the wings. There was black soot, but there didn't seem to be any major damage. Third Dragon revealed his sharp fangs.

A drake was approaching from the forest. The drake and Third Dragon growled wildly at each other. The uninvited drake shouted something and Third Dragon roared back. The war of nerves between two drakes!

It didn't end there as there were two more drakes behind the uninvited one. They threatened Third Dragon. Third Dragon was brave, but there were three drakes.

They watched each other.

Anor was sad. His appearance was superimposed over Third Dragon.

"Third Dragon..."

Crockta watched it and stepped forward. "I didn't intend to intervene but..."

He pulled out his greatsword. A black light emerged from Ogre Slayer

"It is rude to act like this in front of me."

The drakes looked at the orc who suddenly appeared and made absurd facial expressions. Crockta thought that the expressions on the reptiles' faces were very good. Then he glared at them.

[Creatures Butcher (Essence) has been used.]

It was the skill he got after hunting behemoth with the great hunter Shakan. It was an anti-creature skill that increased attack power against the beast and gave the creatures a sense of oppression that neutralized their movements. Then he used the Pinnacle rank skill, Army Crushing Roar of Madness. Even if he didn't roar loudly, the madness of the orc warrior who swept through many battlefields came alive.

Crockta glared at the drakes.

[Heart and Soul Penetration (Pinnacle) has been used. Identifying the drakes.]

[The drakes in this forest are fairly strong, but they are weaker than you. They are stuck. The smell of the slaughtered creatures on you have awakened their fear.]

He used Heart and Soul Penetration to read them.

The drakes retreated.

[The drakes want to run away, but can't because of their pride.]

Crockta just laughed. Their pride. He increased the strength in his eyes.

Kuoooooh-!

Steam rose from Ogre Slayer.

The drakes realized. If they moved even a little bit forward, that sword would slaughter them. That wasn't an ordinary orc.

The drakes were forced to turn around. Third Dragon glanced at them, giving a warning until the end. Anor was amazed as Crockta repelled the drakes. The orc warrior was stronger than Anor initially thought.

Looking back, Crockta had been about to bring a big sword down on Third Dragon the first time Anor saw him. What if Anor hadn't shouted quickly that time? He believed in Third Dragon's strong skeleton and skin, but maybe Third Dragon might've ended up worst from the blow. The back of that orc looked cool.

"Anor."

"Huh?"

“I don’t know you very well, but I’ve been thinking.” Crockta said as he put away his sword. “Why do you want to send Third Dragon away to the Luklan Mountains?”

“You just saw it. Every day is like this.”

“But Third Dragon wants to stay here.”

“Still...”

Crockta approached him. “Aren’t you the one who actually wants to leave?”

He had eyes and ears, so he knew about Anor. He was a mixed breed among the dark elves and humans, causing the town to ignore him. When Crockta and Tiyo had asked about Anor, the dark elves had clearly despised him.

“.....”

Anor looked blank at Crockta’s words. It was like he was looking into his heart.

“Maybe... it might be true.” Anor’s shoulders dropped.

They left Third Dragon in the forest and headed back to Nuridot. They walked through the dark streets and talked. Anor asked, “How did you do it?”

“What?”

“Become close to the dark elves.”

Crockta just laughed. “I’m not close to them.”

“But everyone was pretty friendly...”

“They are acting like that because they need me to do something.”

Nuridot had panicked when the group of orcs appeared in the daytime. It was widely known that the mad chieftain was preparing for war. The wanderers were holding the flag of the Great Clan. The wanderers gave two options: fight or be robbed. Nuridot’s power wasn’t that strong. Big sacrifices would need to be made to fight them off. But it was a situation where they couldn’t accept the orcs’ unreasonable demands.

It was a dilemma. Then all of a sudden, a gnome and orc appeared. The dark elves were puzzled while the orcs laughed at them.

And...

The orcs were wiped out. The orc warrior sliced off the heads of five laughing orcs in an instant. The attitude of the wandering orcs changed immediately. Dozens of orcs raised their weapons against him, but he didn't blink. Rather, he overwhelmed their forces alone.

In the eyes of the dark elves, he looked like a god of war.

The fearsome orc warrior explained to the dark elves. The wanderers would come back, so he would stay and keep watch until that time. He was heading towards the Temple of the Fallen God, but he wanted to cooperate with the dark elves in order to pass through their territory. He also wasn't unrelated to the Great Clan.

To the terrified dark elves of Nuridot, he was their savior. Therefore, the duo entered as guests of Nuridot. His story was widely circulated so no dark elves dared disparage him. Thus, the dark elves were forced to become friendly and embrace them. In particular, Tiyo's cute looks and cheerful attitude was fresh for the dark elves.

Kindness to the weak was useless, but kindness to the strong was something they could respect. That was the world.

"I see..."

Anor's expression didn't change despite Crockta's expression. Crockta had gained the respect he desperately wanted all his life. It was because of strength.

"The world is unfair," muttered Anor.

He had endlessly committed to becoming a member of the dark elf society. He didn't cause any problems. But he was still a stranger to the dark elves. However, Crockta instantly received awe from the dark elves because of his strength.

The reason was strength.

"Yes. The world is unfair."

Crockta grinned.

They returned to Nuridot and arrived at Anor's house. His house wasn't large. It was a small and dilapidated house. It was too crowded with the oversized Crockta and Tiyo. Anor wanted to concede his bed but Crockta and Tiyo declined. They covered the ground with Anor's blankets.

"Are you uncomfortable?"

"It's okay. Tiyo is already asleep."

Tiyo was already snoring. He had a talent for falling asleep anywhere as soon as he put his head on the floor. The gnome was really cute when he closed his eyes and slept like a newborn baby.

Crockta also tried to close his eyes.

Suddenly, Anor said, "Crockta, I had spend my whole life trying to be recognized as a dark elf of Nuridot." His mind had been complicated all day. In particular, he had been shocked by the sight of Nakai being polite to Crockta. "But I am still an outsider. Why?"

Crockta looked up at the dark ceiling. He had only met the dark elf today, but Crockta was able to grasp what Anor was like.

Thus, he felt sadder.

"Anor, what do you want to become here?"

"Me?" Anor thought for a moment. "A good... elf?"

His parents died. His mother, who was a human, had always stressed to Anor.

'Try to be recognized in the dark elf society. Be a good dark elf and always consider others. Always smile. Don't hesitate to assist others.'

Crockta continued, "But based on the results, Nuridot's dark elves don't want Anor to be good."

"What..."

“You will never be able to do enough. It is foolish to repeat the same process and hope that the results will change.” Crockta sighed, “Like I told you, the world is unfair. There is no heaven. It isn’t a place where good will and faith will be returned.”

“.....”

“That is all I will say. Sleep well.”

Anor couldn’t sleep anymore after hearing Crockta’s words.

He turned his head and stared at the darkness below the bed. He couldn’t see it but he felt the huge presence of the orc warrior. Crockta tried to fall asleep. He could hear the sound of Tiyo breathing.

Anor whispered, “Crockta. Are you asleep?”

“...Not yet.”

“I’ll ask one more question. Is it okay?”

“I don’t care.”

Anor wanted to speak, but he couldn’t figure out how to start. Anor clasped his hands together under the blanket. His voice trembled a little as he spoke, “Does that mean I need to change?”

“Yes.”

“I tried to live well, only to be bullied like I was doing something wrong. I am the one suffering, so why do I have to change? Isn’t there something wrong with this?”

“Anor. Your words are correct.” Crockta’s voice seemed gentler in the darkness. He spoke like he was whispering. “But this isn’t due to right or wrong.”

Crockta chuckled in a low voice. Anor couldn’t help smiling at Crockta’s laughter. His question seemed lighter after hearing the orc warrior’s laugh. He felt like he was facing an older brother.

“The world is just like this.”

“The world...”

“In my neighborhood, we call people like you sweet potatoes. Kulkulkul. Don’t think so hard. Just...”

Crockta laughed once again.

“If they treat you like a dog, you should treat them like dogs as well.”



The next morning, a group of wandering orcs invaded Nuridot.

CHAPTER 84

ALIVE (2)

Trumpets sounded to signal the emergency at hand.

Crockta opened his eyes and grasped the handle of his greatsword. The smell of war flowed from far away. Crockta stared at Tiyo who was also holding General. They exchanged glances.

“Drrrong...”

Anor was still asleep. Crockta woke him. Anor was still sleepy and stared blankly at him.

“Anor, go to a shelter.”

“Huh?”

“The enemy has invaded.”

“Invaded?”

“The orcs from yesterday seemed to have invaded again.”

Crockta had shown them his strength. The wandering orcs had been suppressed and shivered in front of him. If those guys invaded this place again, the flow was obvious. They had attacked here again with the support of the Great Clan.

This time they would use more violent means. There would be no dialogue. They would attempt to kill Crockta. Crockta knew this and couldn't help suppressing a smile.

“Does Nuridot have an emergency shelter location?”

“It will probably be the town hall in the center...”

“Go there.”

Anor fully woke up and discovered the great sword that Crockta was carrying. The morning sun leaked through the window and pierced his eyes. Anor asked, "Crockta?"

He touched his greatsword instead of answering.

"Ah..."

Anor had never experienced killing anyone. Until the great chieftain appeared, the north had been balanced in its own way. There were occasional conflicts, but most of them lived quietly in their villages.

Today, Anor was able to see the face of a man going to battle. Crockta proclaimed that he would kill the enemies with his greatsword calmly like he was saying goodbye.

"I understand."

Crockta and Tiyo briefed Anor and left the house. He heard Crockta and Tiyo's footsteps outside. Anor rose from his spot blankly. He ran a hand through his disheveled hair and looked around. He needed to pack up.

'If they treat you like a dog, you should treat them like dogs as well.'

Crockta's words from last night echoed in his head.

Anor would have to do the work directly. The world was about action-reaction. Every action in the world came with a counter balancing act. When hitting the enemy, he also had to be prepared to be hit. Could he become an unshakable person like Crockta?

Anor drew an old dagger out from a drawer. He had never used it even once. But it might be necessary today.

'Son. You should be a good elf.'

His mother's face and words flashed through his head. He shook his head.

'Mother, Nuridot doesn't want me to be a good elf.'

Anor grasped the dagger.



Crockta ran in the direction of the trumpets. It was the outskirts of Nuridot. The dark elves discovered Crockta and shouted.

“Orc! Gnome! This way!”

A guard observing from a watchtower reported the situation.

“The orcs from yesterday are approaching, but there are also orcs on caruks following them. Their equipment is different from the wanderers. These guys...”

The guard gulped and said, “The Great Clan.”

Nuridot’s leader, the dark elf Nadia bit her nails. She fidgeted and stomped her feet. Then she exclaimed, “Send a messenger through the back way to Spinoa.”

“Huh?”

“The Great Clan has come. They aren’t just rabble shaking the flag. but the Great Clan had come directly.”

Nadia pulled a bow from her weapons storage. It was an old but solid weapon. She touched it and confirmed the tension. The militia member tried to protest but she refused and took down a quiver.

“This isn’t an attack on Nuridot, but an attack on the dark elves. This is just the beginning.”

The dark elf’s face stiffened.

The Great Clan was expanding on a scale unlike before. At the heart was the crazy chieftain, Calmahart. He said that he would try to unite the entire north under the Great Clan, but not many guessed he would actually do it.

However, Nadia’s declaration woke them up from such an easy thought.

This was probably the prelude to the war. The war would begin at Nuridot.

“Victory! Stopping them is the most important thing. I’ll break their noses.” Crockta

declared excitedly.

The tense atmosphere loosened at his words. The faces of the dark elves brightened.

The orc Crockta was now their champion. He was the strongest person who suppressed a whole crowd of orcs. There was a rumor that he defeated the orcs of the Great Clan in the Luklan Mountains.

Crockta stepped forward and said, "Open the gate."

The dark elves' eyes opened wide in shock.

"Huh?"

"I told you. I will win." Crockta placed the greatsword on his shoulder. "I will go out and slow down their advance, while you should maintain the defense."

He said to Nadia and the members of Nuridot's militia. Nadia nodded.

"Do as he says. He is a person who is far more familiar with battle than us."

Nadia had lived a long time. Therefore, she had seen a lot of things that others hadn't. She had heard stories about orcs.

There were orc warriors with bodies covered in tattoos. The current orcs had forgotten the traditions of old. As a child, people had told old stories about the genuine orc warriors. If she met them, she had to respect them. They were strong and it wasn't just physical strength.

She might be able to see that strength for herself today.

Nadia begged while holding Crockta's hands, "Please."

Crockta laughed instead of answering.

Nuridot's gate was opened.

Crockta walked out. The tattoos on his body empowered him. Tattoos of War, Honor, and Fighting Spirit. They were everything a warrior needed. Honor and fighting spirit. Those two were enough and he would prove it here on the battlefield.

“Good.”

Crockta walked up to them. A lone orc and an army neared each other. The two sides stopped in front of each other. An orc walked out from among the group of wandering orcs. It was someone he saw yesterday.

“Why do you keep interfering with us?” He said with a frown, “You are an orc, and we are as well. Do orcs need to fight amongst ourselves? I’ll apologize for yesterday’s disrespect, so please join us.”

“.....”

“Under the banner of the chieftain, show everyone what orcs are!”

As he shouted, the group of orcs behind him became louder. The warriors of the Great Clan standing separate from the wanderers also watched Crockta.

“Look, we aren’t lacking in warriors. Let us conquer the north together. Furthermore, we will make the continent kneel under the name of the orcs! The orc’s name! Show them the power of the orc warriors!”

Crockta laughed. These northern guys didn’t know anything. Then he opened his mouth, “Hey, you. The Great Clan guys as well.”

Crockta’s threatening aura started to emerge. Everyone’s looks, including the leader, changed. A tremendous atmosphere.

“Listen carefully.”

Crockta closed his eyes.

At this moment.

In the north, there were no users, and he was Crockta, not Jung Ian. And Crockta was a warrior who could do whatever he wanted. The orc warrior Crockta had already impressed the Luklan Mountains by spouting off some cool words.

Today he also wanted to say something nice.

However, his worries didn’t last long. No matter how he thought about it, this was a

battle moment that didn't require a series of words. It wasn't like these people would be able to understand it. Just one word would be sufficient.

Crockta opened his eyes.

"No. There is no need to listen, just..."

He placed the greatsword on his right shoulder. His left hand stretched out towards them. Then he lifted his finger. Crockta laughed as their faces distorted.

"Come."

It was an obvious provocation! The orcs were outraged.

"Kill himmmmm!"

The orc in the front shouted. From that point on, the orcs started their assault. The wandering orcs were the first ones to strike.

Crockta's greatsword moved through the air, leaving two simultaneously detached heads in its wake. Fountains of blood erupted from the orcs' headless corpses...

Axes headed for him from the left and right. Crockta spun his body and sliced off their wrists. He kicked the opponents who had screamed and grabbed their cut wrists. He trampled on their bodies and jumped.

His goal was the leader of the wanderers.

Crockta flew high in the sky and thrust downwards with his greatsword towards the head of the leader.

Puok!

The gigantic greatsword cleanly cut the body in half. The leader's body fell to the left and right, showing a cleanly cut surface. Blood rained down.

Regardless, he walked forward. Crockta looked like a demon as he became covered in blood. He looked around. Numerous orcs were overwhelmed by his power and didn't dare come closer. Crockta grinned.

"All you have is an advantage of numbers."

Then he turned back around. He could see Nuridot in the distance.

He ran. He ran out of this area before they could regain their spirits. They were weak but there were a lot of them. Bullying him with numbers!

"Too manyyyyyy!"

In order to be successful, he had to move out of this area. There were more enemies than he thought. This was a strategic retreat. The enemy orcs regained their spirit.

Urok, the leader of the Great Clan soldiers, shouted at them.

"Foolish guys! Follow my command! Run at Nuridot!"

"Kuwaaah!"

"Catch that bastard!"

Urok admired the chaos Crockta managed to create during the short engagement. He wasn't an ordinary opponent. The other warriors of the Great Clan, including the chieftain, still looked down on Crockta but Urok was different.

This was the person who beat Hammerchwi. Hammerchwi might be old, but he was an experienced and strong warrior. He had come back wounded and different.

Crockta was obviously strong.

"Kulkul." He was glad. "I was right as well."

it was because the worst case scenario for Urok was Crockta's inaction.



"Hey, halfie."

Anor heard a voice as he entered the town hair. It was Nakai. He was standing here while leading his group.

“This is a great opportunity. You might be pretending but doesn’t everybody know?”

They laughed. Anor ignored them. Someone in the hall briefly explained the current situation and how to use weapons. Once the situation became urgent, they would be sent to the outskirts to defend the barriers against the orcs.

“Like this?”

One of the dark elves following Nakai was practicing with a rapier and he stabbed it towards Anor. Anor freaked out and retreated. It stopped right in front of Anor. They burst out laughing.

“Puhahat, look at his surprise.”

“It’s amazing to see his ears perk up like an elf’s.”

The townspeople paid attention to them. Nakai’s group giggled like they hadn’t realized the situation yet. They weren’t thinking about the aftermath of the battle at all. Anor was secretly hoping they would worsen the situation, then be forced to cry and beg when they were scolded.

He tried to create such a situation.

“Is that right?” asked Anor.

The elderly man teaching the villagers how to use weapons was once a member of the militia, and he turned around after seeing the attitudes of the other dark elves.

“Just this once...” But his expression subtly changed as he saw Anor’s face. “... You take care of it. Tsk.”

He turned around like it was troublesome.

Anor sighed as he thought.

‘How do I not roll over like a dog, Crockta?’

The moment that he was fingering his dagger. There was a scream outside the hall.

“Kyaaaak...! Ahak...”

The scream soon stopped. It was silent inside the hall. The scream didn't stop on its own. Rather, it sounded like the person was forcibly stopped by someone.

It couldn't be.

Heavy footsteps were heard outside. There were several of them. The weight of the sound was also different from the dark elves they knew. There was the sound of iron clanking. The visitors knocked on the door of the town hall.

Kung kung kung!

The dark elves gulped.

Kung kung kung kung!

Within a few minutes, the visitors arrived at the door. There was a knock on the door. The door could only withstand a few strikes before shattering. Then the attackers were revealed.

Orcs wearing the flag of the Great Clan. They laughed as they saw the dark elves gathered together.

"What is this, a buffet?"

CHAPTER 85

ALIVE (3)

“What is this, a buffet?”

An orc warrior in steel armor strode forward, causing the dark elves to hurriedly retreat back.

“How fun.”

There were more than 10 orcs, all of which had blood dripping down their sides. It was from the people they had just killed.

“Hiik...!”

Every time they took a step forward, a path opened, like Moses’ miracle of splitting the Red Sea. The orcs stared at the dark elves.

“Isn’t this easy?”

“It seems like everyone is gathered here for us to eat.”

“Somehow, not one of them are looking at us. Kukuk...”

An orc warrior chewed on a piece of bread that was on the table. Then he frowned and spat it out. He wiped his mouth and raised a hand to the shoulder of a dark elf near him.

“Hey.”

“...Yes?”

“Is this tasty?”

“Huh?”

“Will it be tasty if I eat it?”

“That...”

The orc laughed as the dark elf hesitated. Then he grabbed the hair and slammed the dark elf onto the ground.

“Why aren’t you answering?”

“D-Delicious. Delicious,” replied the terrified dark elf.

The other orcs laughed at his appearance. It was a humiliating spectacle.

“Haha, indeed. This is why big ears are my favorite.” The orc kicked the piece of bread he spat out towards the dark elf. “Then eat it.”

“.....!”

“Big Ears, you said it was delicious, so you should eat it.”

The dark elf looked at the orc with trembling eyes. The wicked axe came into view. The blood and flesh on it made it obvious that someone had just been slaughtered. The axe was pushed closer to his face. He smelled blood.

“That...”

The moment the dark elf hesitated, the axe struck downwards. The dark elf’s head was destroyed. The skull was split open and bits of the brain were revealed inside. The dark elves gulped at the horrific cruelty. However, the orcs just laughed like this was a game.

“Hahaha, your personality is so urgent!”

“You should at least listen to these guys.”

“That’s right.”

The leader of the orcs walked towards the podium in the hall. “Isn’t there a lot of time left?”

The militia member, who had been explaining how to prepare for battle, was shaking on the stage. The orc grabbed the militia member’s ear and pulled.

“Aaack!”

“If you see that I’m coming, you should leave, you fool.”

He threw the militia member downwards. The ear was torn and blood flowed out. The ear was still held in the orc’s hands.

“Eh? Why didn’t you go as well?” asked the orc as he played with the torn piece of ear.

The laughter of the orcs grew louder. The leader also laughed and threw the ear towards the crowd of dark elves. The dark elves shrieked as blood splashed on them.

The orc stood on the podium.

“This is nice and easy. I am the warrior Karmat and I fight under the banner of the great chieftain. We originally intended to collect all of you as hostages... You knew this beforehand and gathered here. How wonderful. I express my sincere gratitude. Kuhahahat!”

The orcs laughed again. None of the dark elves laughed.

Karmat continued speaking, “I don’t know the situation and you are supposed to wait with us until the signal comes but... In the meantime, we’ll be bored. We can’t kill the precious hostages.”

Karmat touched his chin and looked around at the dark elves. “So I thought of a fun game. How about it, do you want to play?”

“Kulkulkul! Let’s do it!”

“How fun!” replied the orcs.

Karmat grinned and nodded. The scene of a group of people enjoying themselves while the other group were terrified was absurd.

“All in favor! I’ll do it! I’m going to!”

“Yes!”

“.....”

“Okay. Let’s start. Um... first... how about the popular vote? The popular vote.”

Karmat descended from the podium. He gazed at the cowering dark elves in front of him. They all avoided eye contact. “One person. Vote for one person to be killed.”

“.....!”

“Isn’t it good? There must be one person that you don’t like. If you decide on one person, we will resolve it. Then you can rest for the remaining time without worrying. Isn’t this too kind?”

Karmat sniggered. He was enjoying this wicked behavior. He liked having the upper hand and being able to tease them psychologically.

The dark elves were all silent. Karmat knew this would be the case when he decided on the game. So he immediately wielded his axe.

“Kyaaaaak!”

“Kuheook!”

It was a random blow towards the crowd of dark elves. One of the dark elves standing in front was cut in half and die, while another standing next to him had the abdomen cut and his guts spilled out. Another person had a shallow wound.

Karmat smiled and declared, “10 seconds.”

He began stamping his foot.

Kung. Kung. Kung.

As the tenth stomp approached, the dark elves started to panic. Karmat smiled and stomped his foot again. Then he tightened his grip on his axe. The dark elves were shaken. He scanned the faces with his eyes. In the middle of the crowd, one male glared. Karmat laughed and gradually moved his feet.

Then just as he did the eighth stomp,

“Him!”

Someone shouted. Karmat looked in the direction of the loud voice. It was a young male dark elf. Then Karmat followed the direction of the finger.

A dark elf stood with an expression of despair.

“Anor, that brat.”



Anor's eyes widened. He couldn't believe this.

Nakai's finger was pointing towards him. Then his name was called. Anor spread open his arms and looked around.

“What...”

But none of the dark elves looked at him. They turned their heads away from Anor with a relieved expression. His blood chilled.

The cursed orc was approaching him. “This is a majority vote. Now, if anyone opposes the murder of this Anor, raise your hand.”

They didn't move. Karmat's shoulders shook like he was having fun.

“What? No one is opposing? Anor, how did you manage to live this far? Eh? Your heart must hurt. Are you being bullied? Kulkulkulkul!”

The smell of the orc next to him entered his nose. He laughed as he pushed his face against Anor's. It was the face of an orc, but unlike Crockta, this face was too ugly.

“Is there really nobody who objects? Do you want to save this friend and vote again?”

The dark elves were silent. Karmat let out a large burst of laughter, “This is funny! Yes, Anor! You should've lived a better life!”

Karmat placed an arm around Anor's shoulder. Then he dragged Anor towards the podium. Anor was led like a cow towards the slaughter. He would die. Anor looked at Nakai. Their eyes met. Nakai avoided his gaze. Anor couldn't help smiling bitterly.

“You should've lived better~,” Karmat sang.

Anor's head became complicated. He lived well enough. No, he lived the best in this place. This bastard orc.

Karmat pulled Anor in front of the podium. Anor felt lightheaded. He looked at Karmat. He waited for the axe to swing but it wasn't the end. Karmat walked through the dark elves again.

".....!"

He came back with Nakai, who screamed, but became quiet after being kicked.

"The rules have changed." The dark elves froze while the orcs cheered. "This guy, he sells someone out from his own village. Right Anor? Right?"

Karmat said with a sweet smile, "So I have decided to mediate between the two of you in the manner of the orcs."

He handed a dagger to Anor and Nakai. It seemed like something he was carrying around as secondary weapons.

"Fight." He was proposing a game with their lives on the line. "I'll give you 20 seconds. If you don't settle this by then, both of you will die."

Then he stepped back. Anor looked at Nakai. He was holding a dagger but he didn't know what to do. Everyone's gaze was turned towards them.

Kung!

Karmat stomped his feet.

Kung!

The meaning was obvious. Once that sound was heard 20 times, their necks would be cut. How did he want to meet his end? Anor thought it would be better to stand still and die than be played by them.

However, that was just his thoughts.

Nakai charged. The dagger was swung randomly. Nakai also hadn't learned how to fight properly. The orcs laughed at his moves. But Anor couldn't laugh when faced with

the dagger. The blade swung at him.

“S-Stop!”

Anor cried out as he retreated. Something was felt behind him.

“.....!”

He looked back and saw that retreating was blocked by an orc warrior. His expression was like a guard dog. He gestured towards the front.

Anor breathed out as he gazed at Nakai again. For some reason, his forearm was sore. He looked down and saw that it was bleeding.

“Die, hybrid bastard!” Nakai screamed and rushed forward again.

That expression. Something seemed to snap in Anor.

“Uwaaaaaah!”

Anor struck out with his dagger. It was a short encounter. Both of them wielded their daggers but they didn’t enter within range of each other. It was because both feared the blade. A knife was a formidable weapon.

Karmat didn’t like this and the stomping of his feet accelerated.

“10 seconds left!”

It seemed like they had fought for a very long time, but it was only 10 seconds. Nakai urgently ran forward. Anor closed his eyes and waved his dagger.

“Ack!”

Jeurereuk.

One person hesitated. It was Anor.

Anor looked down at his arm. Blood poured out. Nakai had cleverly aimed for his arm. As Anor closed his eyes, Nakai had ducked behind him and sliced his arm. Anor couldn’t withstand the pain and dropped the dagger.

Now he was defenseless. The victor was decided.

Nakai headed towards him.

“Hey, Elf. I’ll teach you.” Karmat stood next to Nakai. “Aim for the neck. With a knife, you can kill the enemy just be lightly slashing it. Now, calmly.”

He laughed like he was having a lot of fun as he advised Nakai. Nakai’s trembling hand moved towards Anor’s neck.

Death was near. Anor was keenly aware of it.

“Shit...”

Anor swore for the very first time. Nakai flinched at the wild eyes but he kept staring down at Anor’s neck. The blade approached.

“This dog bastard...”

It wasn’t a big curse word. Nakai called a bastard a dog bastard. A dog bastard who rolled over like a dog.

The moment that Nakai’s blade was about to touch Anor’s neck,

“I am a dog bastard.” Anor stood up and stabbed Nakai’s neck.

Nakai’s eyes widened as he stuttered with a disbelieving expression.

“K-Keok...”

Blood flowed out from where the dagger was stuck in the neck. Anor pulled out the dagger and blood poured out. The dagger in Anor’s hand was the one he had brought from home. He had lost the one given by the orc, but this one still remained. He had killed Nakai with that dagger.

It was his victory. Anor muttered, “Dog bastard...”

The orcs cheered at the unexpected ending. Karmat started clapping.

“Hahahahat! Wow Anor, you dog bastard! You aren’t like a dark elf. Carrying your own

knife, what a great person! Kuhahahat! You reversed the situation? Puhahahat!”

He laughed like he was excited by the death. Then he placed an arm around Anor’s shoulder.

“Anor, I like you! I like you! Puhahat...!”

But his laughter didn’t last. He pushed Anor away, who fell down with a loud noise. Karmat’s face distorted like he was a demon.

“This bastard...”

Blood was flowing from his chest. Anor had tried to stab Karmat. Anor got up. He was holding only one dagger. The tip was aimed at the smiling orcs on the edge.

“What, this dog bastard.” Karmat no longer laughed. “You mistook foolishness for bravery.”

He raised his axe. “I will just kill you.”

The enraged orc approached Anor. Anor trembled but he was smiling. He was going to die anyway. He had lived like a fool in the meantime. So finally, he decided not to roll over like a dog.

Karmat raised his axe. The blood on the axe still wasn’t dry. Anor realized that death was close. At that moment,

“Kiaaaaaaah!”

There was a roar from the entrance of the hall. Everyone looked over there. Anor couldn’t believe his eyes.

There. It was Third Dragon.

“Third Dragon?”

He must’ve felt that the situation in Nuridot was unusual and came to find Anor. Third Dragon growled as he discovered the orcs in the hall. Flames blew from his snout.

“Third Dragon! No! Run away!”

The orc warriors were familiar with combat and rushed towards the intruder without hesitation. Axes were swung towards Third Dragon. Third Dragon emitted flames.

“Kuaaaaahhhhh!”

“Oooh!”

The orc warriors survived the flames. A translucent shield was wrapped around their bodies. Karmat laughed.

“How did we come here secretly? Kukukuk.”

An unknown light was coming from Karmat’s hands. A shaman. He was a warrior, but also a shaman. They had been able to sneak into the town thanks to his magic.

Anor screamed as he watched the orcs attack Third Dragon. “Nooooooooo!”

However, the law of cause and effect in this world acted in a relentless manner. The orc warriors ruthlessly swung their axes towards Third Dragon. They struck Third Dragon’s body. There was nothing special. Blood splattered from Third Dragon every time the orc warriors wielded their axes. As the assault from the axes continued, Third Dragon died.

That was it.

“Is that a friend of yours? Huh?” Karmat laughed.

Anor looked at him. Of course, Karmat looked disgusting. Anor raised his dagger instead of answering. Nakai’s blood was still dripping from it.

“Hey, are you trying to fight us with that? Puhahat.” Karmat laughed. The orc warriors watched Anor like they were excited. They expected an enjoyable game to unfold.

‘You should be a good elf.’

He remember his mother’s voice.

‘You should be a good elf.’

She always looked sad.

'I hope you do, but the dark elves' society probably won't let you.'

He remembered the words he hadn't wanted to remember for a long time.

'If you are in a situation where you can't live as a good elf anymore, have a strong heart and give up being an elf.'

'I don't think I can live as a good elf anymore. Mother. I'm sorry.'

Anor picked up the dagger. Then he put the blade to the long ears that were the symbol of an elf.

'Cut off your ears and make yourself a bad human.'

Seokeok.

His ears easily fell off. As his ears fell, the forbidden lineage in his blood stretched out, as if it had been waiting for a long time.

CHAPTER 86

ALIVE (4)

Anor trimmed off both of his ears. The dark elf's unique ears were half cut. The appearance was straight like an elf, but it was a size similar to a human. It was a strange appearance that wasn't a dark elf or human.

Black energy emerged from Anor's body.

".....!"

Karmat instinctively recoiled. The black energy was an aura of death that frightened all of the living.

"This..."

He looked through his memories. Surely not. This was a strength that was said to be cut off a long time ago in the north.

"Dammit..."

Someone grabbed his feet. He looked down. The dead Nakai had risen and stabbed a dagger in his calf. Karmat dropped down.

"Kuaaaak!"

He grabbed Nakai's head but the undead didn't feel any pain so the arm kept moving mechanically. *Puok, puok*. The dagger kept on being stabbed in his calves. Karmat threw Nakai away desperately.

Nakai's body squirmed as it hit the wall. He got up again with a rattle. The bones moved strangely due to being forced out of place from the impact, but he kept on walking back to Karmat.

"Necromancer!" shouted Karmat to his men.

He looked around.

“.....!”

One of his men was hanging upside down in the air. The drake they killed got up again and was chewing on the head of an orc.

“Dammit...”

He was a warrior and a shaman. He could see the deep concentration of magic power in Anor’s eyes. It was the magic of death. How did this guy show up? This wasn’t an opponent he could match with his magic power.

“Then the way to deal with this opponent...”

He gripped his axe tightly. However, it was difficult to get rid of the undead clinging to his ankles. His body staggered. He needed to kill that guy.

Anor stared at him blankly. Karma gritted his teeth. His companions were approaching. Okay. It was possible if there were several of them.

“Come. We are both...”

But there was something more. He looked at his approaching companions. Their eyes were vacant.

“Dammit...”

Karmat’s men were slain by the drake and were now heading towards him in an antagonistic manner. Their hands lifted the axes up high.

Karmat shouted, “The rest! Retreat! Retreat! Join with the ones who are still searching!”

The orc warriors stopped fighting and moved quickly. One of them helped Karmat. The undead chased them, but their speed was so slow that they couldn’t catch up. The orc warriors stampeded out of the hall.

“.....”

Once again, a dead silence filled the area. The dark elves shook in fear of Anor. They all avoided his gaze.

“Just like his mother...”

“Cursed blood...” Some of them whispered.

Anor could hear all of it. Anor turned towards the exit. He didn't want to be here anymore.

Just before he left the hall, someone grabbed his clothing and said, “W-Wait a minute.”

“.....?”

Anor turned his head. A female dark elf was behind him. She was part of Nakai's group that always looked at him with scornful eyes. He wondered if she was coming to apologize.

“If you go away...”

“...?”

“What do we do if the orcs come back? You should stay here...”

The other dark elves in the hall nodded. They were afraid of Anor, but they still hoped he would stay here as their protector.

Anor looked up at the sky for a moment. He didn't think for long.

He immediately kicked her in the abdomen, causing her to fall flat on her face.

Anor spat at her and said, “Get lost, you crazy bitch.”



Ogre Slayer broke the neck of an orc warrior trying to cross the barrier. Blood poured out. Crockta used his whole body to swing his greatsword again.

He was protecting the outer barriers of Nuridot. The dark elves were resisting. Arrows flew over the barrier and pierced an orc.

The orcs didn't stop despite being hit by a few arrows. Rather, they gave a sharp battle cry to raise their strength. The pain turned to hatred. The hatred was infused in their

axes as they jumped towards the barrier.

The orcs pushed into the barrier and the dark elves shrank back.

At that moment, a huge roar was heard. “Bul’tarrrrrrrrrr——!”

The footsteps of the orcs hesitated. It was like a giant wind was pushing behind them as the fighting spirit of the dark elves rose. The enemies retreated one step like they were caught in the wind. Crockta’s shout was an excellent weapon that increased his allies’ morale.

The battlefield became stagnant in that moment. The orcs and dark elves paused at the collapsing barrier. The two sides couldn’t attack carelessly.

“You monster.”

As a barrier collapsed, an orc warrior walked towards Nuridot’s line of defense. It was the commander of the Nuridot invasion, Urok.

He grinned at Crockta and said, “You are a great warrior. Are you called Crockta?”

“Um.”

“Dark elves, thank this warrior. If it weren’t for him, you would already be defeated by us.”

Urok was overflowing with confidence. It was difficult to understand considering that the Nuridot invasion wasn’t flowing his way. Crockta looked around. Was there a tactic that he was hiding? There were obviously many orc warriors, but the dark elves were resisting. If he added his own actions, this battle would eventually lead to Nuridot’s victory. The warrior Urok had to know this.

Crockta couldn’t suppress his anxiety.

“Crockta, won’t you join our Great Clan?”

“There was someone who already made that offer.” Crockta said with a smile.

The leader of the wandering orcs had asked him to join the Great Clan. Crockta had replied by cutting him from his head to his crotch.

Urok had also witnessed this.

“He did, that is true, but I am not like that guy. I am someone who has received the title of warrior directly from the great chieftain, Calmahart. Not just you, but that gnome will also be accepted as one of us.”

The name came out again. Crockta’s eyes narrowed.

“Don’t make me laugh. The north truly is different from the continent, Crockta,” muttered Tiyo from beside Crockta.

Crockta started laughing.

“There are also some dirty bastards there.”

“Didn’t you speak to Hammerchwi?”

“There are also people like Hammerchwi. And they all died.” Crockta grinned. “There is no need to remember their names, the poor bastards.”

Now matter how strong or skilled they were, it was worthless against Crockta. Rather, the name of Caburak from Orchem was more valuable, despite him losing all his power.

The law of the Great Clan that cut everything with force was just the calculations of a beast. It wasn’t what made an orc an orc.

“It will be the same for you too.”

“You are a dangerous person, Crockta. Kuhahahat.”

Urok laughed one more time before whispering to an orc by his side. The person nodded before pulling out a bow and arrow. The bow was a weapon that didn’t go well with orcs. Crockta watched carefully.

The arrowhead aimed towards the sky. At that moment, Crockta picked up an axe from the corpse of an orc warrior on the ground and threw it. The axe spun as it flew. However, the arrow was already too far. The arm of the orc shooter was cut off at the same time that the fire arrow flew into the sky. He screamed as blood poured out.

“You noticed pretty quickly,” said Urok.

“What did you do?”

“Don’t think that the great chieftain is blind like other orcs, Crockta. He can see everything on the battlefield. He is a true warlord among the orcs.” Urok raised his axe to the sky. “By now, a shaman of the Great Clan will be sneaking troops into Nuridot and killing its worthless dark elves.

“.....!”

Crockta and the dark elves were shocked.

“Surrender if you don’t want any more meaningless slaughter.”

The dark elves were agitated. Some fidgeted like they wanted to return to the town right away. Their families were there. The morale of the militia dropped rapidly. A sense of helplessness spread, like they were already defeated.

“Stop right now!” shouted Nadia. “Let’s stop and talk. Urok! If you have a conscience, you shouldn’t kill civilians who aren’t guilty of anything!”

Urok laughed at Nadia, “Conscience? Our conscience isn’t like that.”

As Urok gestured, the orcs picked up their weapons again. The short cease-fire was over. “Inflicting a painful death or be killed, that is our conscience.”

“.....!”

“The great warrior Karmat, who entered Nuridot, is a madman without a conscience. Kulkulkul!”

Urok walked forward. Dark elves aimed arrows from above. However, the arrows were shaking. Their minds were already filled with worry about the rear. The faces of their family overlapped with the orc in front of them.

“Wait!” Nadia shouted.

Crockta looked at her. Their eyes met. Nadia had an apologetic expression on her face. She struggled and bit her lips before eventually declaring her surrender.

“I surrender, so stop the attack on the rear.”

“Hoh.”

“I will surrender.”

“Then drop your weapons.”

“Once the safety of the residents...”

“Then the battle will continue. Listen to the power of weapons.”

The orcs started laughing. They were certain of their victory. The Great Clan had gained dominance by being crueler than anyone else. What they were doing now wasn't a war, but closer to a massacre.

“Everybody...”

The moment that Urok was about to order the attack, Nadia abandoned her weapon.

“.....!”

She looked around at the other dark elves. She didn't say anything, but everybody understood her meaning. One by one, the militia started to discard their weapons. Now the dark elves had no more weapons.

Crockta and Tiyo were the only ones left.

“Isn't this a little unfair?” Tiyo asked.

Crockta shrugged.

“What will you do, Crockta?”

“Hrmm...”

Crockta wondered if he should continue or leave Nuridot and escape. He hadn't thought the dark elves would be so naive.

“Oh, Karmat is coming,” Urok said.

Everyone turned around. A series of orc warriors were coming from the town. Their weapons were bloody. The faces of the dark elves stiffened.

“Don’t worry, dark elves. I told him not to kill everyone, so some of your family members will be alive.”

The word ‘some’ raised hope and despair in them. It made the dark elves more enthusiastic. Now the dark elves were looking at Crockta and Tiyo like they were urging them.

‘Discard your weapon and surrender’ was in their eyes.

Crockta narrowed his eyes. He felt dirty. He couldn’t understand their minds, and he didn’t like this change of attitude. Tiyo felt the same and raised General even more. They were companions who had fought together. They didn’t even need to look at each other to know what they were thinking. Crockta nodded and was about to raise his greatsword.

Then someone said, “Wow, this situation looks absurd.”

It was a carefree voice. Everybody looked back.

The voice spoke again, “What are you looking at, you fucking bastards.”

A dark elf was walking behind the orc warriors coming from the town. The dark elf seemed weak. But the voice wasn’t coming from an orc. The orcs’ eyes were dead.

“You shouldn’t do this to guests you invited to help, you crazy bastards.”

The dark elf stood among the orcs. It was a terrible looking elf with blood coming from his cut ears. The calm voice didn’t match the curses that were being spat out. It was an awkward tone that didn’t match the threat.

“I’m playing with dogs.”

It was Anor. Somehow, his eyes looked different. He raised a hand and all the orc warriors lifted their weapons. Crockta realized that they were similar to the undead that he saw in Orcrox’s dungeon.

Crockta started laughing. He didn’t know what was happening, but,

‘I tried to live well only to be bullied like I was doing something wrong. I am the one suffering, so why do I have to change? Isn’t there something wrong with this?’

The Anor right now seemed better than the one who had once whispered those words.

“You are alive.”

CHAPTER 87

TUNA

Urok had an arrow in his neck.

“Kuoh...”

He pressed against the blood welling up from his wound and glared at the enemy. There were three people who interfered with him.

The orc warrior from the continent, Crockta. The gnome soldier who came with Crockta, Tiyo. Then the one who suddenly appeared with the forgotten bloodline of a necromancer, Anor. Without them, Nuridot would’ve fallen into his hands without any great sacrifices. But the three of them had screwed up everything.

He tried to do a last hurrah with his axe, but his body didn’t move. A red tinge could be seen at the edge of his vision. Death was approaching. He felt sure that it was his end. In the end, Urok cursed them in order to see their triumphant expressions fall.

“Great chieftain... come after you.”

However, the reaction he was hoping for didn’t come out. Their expressions became more excited like they had been waiting for that to happen. Urok acknowledged his defeat. These people were bolder and stronger than he thought.

He raised his gaze. Crockta’s greatsword was covering the sun.

Ahh, that light, the flash of a soldier shining on the battlefield. A dark curtain started to descend from above his head. Urok realized that the darkness was the death that came to meet him. He saw little flashes of light bounce off the edge of the blade.

Thus, he met his end with wide open eyes.

“The end.”

The situation was reversed after Anor appeared. Crockta mercilessly slew the orcs and the orcs he killed were raised again by Anor. The dark elves didn’t have to worry about

damage to the undead, so they could shoot arrows randomly.

The Great Clan warriors stubbornly threw themselves at the dark elves, but they couldn't reverse the situation. Urok's death was a signal as the orcs started to retreat.

The dark elves cheered at the victory. However, the three men who led the battle to victory weren't pleased.

"Anor."

Crockta called out to him. Anor reflexively replied, "What crazy bastard called me... ah, Crockta."

"....."

It was now his reflex to spit out curses. What was this?

Crockta shrugged. "You seem to have suffered. Are your ears okay?"

"Ah, yes. Well..."

Anor touched the shortened ends of his ears. The ears were shortened, and he no longer looked like a dark elf, but a tanned human. Crockta nodded towards the dark elves.

"They seem to want an explanation."

Now that the orcs retreated, the dark elves were staring at Anor with loathe and fear-filled eyes...

In the past, Crockta had met a man called Iron who liked wine in Chesswood. He was a necromancer like Anor. It was just like that time. The power to raise the dead always provoked people's fear.

"Yes."

Anor straightened his back.

He decided not to care anymore. He cut off his ears in a crisis and the power was liberated.

The fact that selfish dark elves tried to kill him for their own safety and he needed to free the power of the dark elves pointed out the duality of Nuridot. It might be argued that that the worst ones weren't the orcs, but the terrible prejudices of the dark elves.

But Anor decided to abandon all of that. He had been persecuted for his whole life in Nuridot. The dark elves who treated him like that didn't deserve an explanation. There was nothing different.

Anor said with a grin, "What are you looking at, dog scum?"



Ian disconnected. He checked his watch and saw that he had been connected for a long time. Ian felt hungry. What was in the fridge?

"Nothing..."

He opened the refrigerator and found nothing. It was mostly empty. Suddenly, he found an unfamiliar sealed container. A post-it note was attached. The post-it was from Yiyu and the following was written:

-Stop the game and eat. Game loser.

He opened it and found a sandwich. It was a bit out of shape, like she had created it herself. Ian smiled and bit the sandwich, tasting canned tuna among crunchy greens. The taste was okay.

"Hrmm..."

He recalled the contents of the game as he walked into the living room. This time, he had connected for a long time. Since he played alone in the north where there were no users, he could immerse himself in Elder Lord. For a while, he forgot that he was Jung Ian and really lived like Crockta.

If it hadn't been for the system warning message, he might still have been playing.

"I really am a game loser."

He checked his phone. There were a few messages from Han Yeorì. He had been connected to Elder Lord for so long that he hadn't seen her for a while. Ian decided to

visit the cafe. He should do something for the hard-working Han Yeori.

He washed up and headed towards Cafe Reason.

The store was quiet. It was holidays so the number of students decreased. Ian smiled and turned to the counter.

“Have you been well?” Han Yeori’s eyes widened as she found Ian. Then she rolled her eyes and chatted to Yoo Sooyeon beside her.

“Sooyeon, do you know what that face is?”

“Boss-nim?”

“No, not the boss. A demon. That is the face of a demon.”

Yoo Sooyeon laughed. It seemed like the two of them had become very close.

“The face of the capitalist demon, who entrusts his store to others and lives a leisurely life.”

“I can hear you.”

“I am saying it so that you can hear,” retorted Han Yeori.

Ian smiled bitterly. He certainly didn’t care for the store, as he only accessed Elder Lord all day long.

“I understand. Should we meet up once you are finished?”

Ian’s words meant he would buy them dinner. Han Yeori quickly replied, “Tuna.”

“.....”

“Expensive tuna.”

Yoo Sooyeon just tilted her head.

“Sooyeon hasn’t eaten proper tuna. Boss-nim will let you try it today. The demon has a conscience.”

She poked fun at Ian as she talked to Yoo Sooyeon. Ian smiled at the scene.

“Okay, I understand.”

“Yes!”

Han Yeori smiled widely. He had a feeling that he would be spending a lot today.

A group of guests entered. As Han Yeori and Yoo Sooyeon took their orders, Ian looked around the cafe. He aligned the chairs, checked the trash and refilled the supplies. Then he sat down in a corner of the cafe. He stared at the interior of Café Reason. Ian became excited as he looked around his store.

He decorated everything according to his own taste.

From his childhood to the battlefield, Ian had lived in environments that he couldn't choose. He couldn't do anything as a child and he didn't have any freedom as a soldier. At best, he was only given a choice of what type of gun and knife to use.

The first time Ian could think about what he liked was when he came home and set up a café. The work of decorating the store according to his own preferences acted as a rehabilitation that brought he back from his life as a soldier.

From the dark walnut colored tables, the iron chairs that firmly supported the back, pipes that appeared in the steampunk and partitions to create a flow among the guests. He even picked out the font for the menu on the counter. The counter was at a low height for the customers and employees to easily see each other.

“Welcome.”

Han Yeori greeted a customer. Her eyes were welcoming and friendly. Yes, even she was his choice. He liked the lines around her eyes when she smiled.

Suddenly, he caught Han Yeori's eyes. Her eyebrows raised at his expression. Then as soon as a customer stood at the counter, her face changed abruptly as she smiled brightly.

Ian smiled and closed his eyes. He leaned back in the iron chair. That's right. All of this was his choice. Everything in Café Reason was what he liked, and it was his wish to see it for a long time.



[Boss-nim, Unni is wondering about the place? ㄱ ㄱ ㄱ]

The message came from Yoo Sooyeon.

He had first met her on the day that Lenox died. He had gone back to Orcrox and was confused when he ended the connection. He went for an early morning walk and saved her from being bullied.

Her profile picture was of her smiling while standing in Café Reason. In a corner of the screen, Han Yeori's hand in a V sign could also be seen. Well, it was good that they seemed to be getting along. He hadn't asked her any details thus far, but her face had gradually brightened.

[An area near the café. I'll let you know the location later.]

Then Ian added as a joke,

[You should bring some digestives in case there is an accident.]

He hadn't cared for the café lately, so he was planning to feed them properly today. Not long ago, the salary for an Elder Lord ranker was received. It was sufficient.

The support for rankers was a lot bigger than he initially thought. It was huge. There was one more '0' than what he had been thinking.

"...It is enough to buy the café's building."

It was only the first settlement, but it would be enough if he got a loan. Then Ian pictured the face of the good-hearted landlord who occasionally came in for coffee. He might have a lot of money now, but Ian felt uncomfortable crossing a line.

Ian had been worried when the system asked for an account. He knew Ji Hayeon, the successor to the Myeongsong Group.

He had a strange relationship with her due to his military background. It wasn't hard for her to find information about him. It didn't matter if she discovered that he was Crockta, but he felt like he wouldn't be able to enjoy Elder Lord like before if his identity was known.

So when he searched for information, Ian came up with a description of the core system.

The entire funding for rankers was transferred to an account managed by the core system 'Albino.' The funds would be transferred to the virtual account created by Albino, and then distributed to the 500 rankers. Once the settlement was over, all the information including the virtual account was deleted.

It was a confidential security system designed for the users who chose to remain private among the rankers. Even the developers of the Elder Lord system weren't able to browse the personal information.

Ian turned off the chat program and heard a voice near him.

-The Heaven and Earth Clan led by Choi Hansung's 'Rommel' has declared war on the Metatron Clan, which is ranked first on Elder Lord's power ranking. There are some people who see the clan war as a fight between Korean and US users, because the clans are mainly composed of people from these countries.

It was the familiar voice of the Elder Lord Times host. Someone was watching Elder Lord Times on their phone. Ian was also curious about Elder Lord. Ever since he left for the north, he didn't get much news about Elder Lord.

-The Heaven and Earth Clan has recently expanded by interacting closely with the NPCs of Elder Lord. This tactic reminds me of the Thawing Balhae Clan that is now gone. Choi Hansung...

Ian's eyes narrowed. He confirmed the information on Choi Hansung. He had a handsome face and outstanding abilities. He was a person who could play the main character in a movie or drama.

-Choi Hansung is currently ranked second in Elder Lord's rankings. This is the highest number among Koreans. Therefore, his stock has sharply and he received a lot of offers for CFs. (commercials).

-That reminds me, it seems like the 'Choi Hansung Ramen' is very popular recently. He said that he enjoyed eating this ramen before playing Elder Lord.

The hosts of Elder Lord Times then changed the topic. They introduced various topics about Elder Lord.

The war between the Heaven and Earth Clan and Metatron Clan, the independent user village created by the elf Elaine was enjoying tremendous prosperity and the fact that a new king was crowned as the head of the allied human cities.

There was also a familiar name.

–Organizations following in the footsteps of the Orc of Justice, Crockta, have formed. Recently, I heard that the necromancer Iron has come to the fore as a member of Crockta’s fan club, ‘He’s an Orc, yet still Praiseworthy!’ Players from all over Elder Lord have joined.

–The Rehabilitation Brothers have succeeded in reforming the master of the Et Clan, aka Tiger Mask. This has ended the long battle between the Rehabilitation Brothers and the ET Clan. Let’s listen to the interview.

Ian smiled warmly.

Recently, the number of members in his fan club ‘He’s an Orc, yet still Praiseworthy’ have increased. Youvidser Laney, who became famous due to Crockta, was a member of the fan club and some celebrities tried to follow the flow by mentioning Crockta.

Everyone was hoping for his return. He would return to the continent with the head of the great chieftain.

“Kulkulkul.”

Ian unconsciously laughed like an orc, before coughing as he felt the gazes towards him. He had recently taken on Crockta’s tone. He needed to be cautious so that Yiyu didn’t notice. He had to be careful.

“Boss-nim.”

Han Yeori and Yoo Sooyeon approached him. Han Yeori grabbed Ian’s sleeve and pulled him up.

“You should think about what to do to raise café sales. You don’t have a sense of crisis at all.”

“What’s wrong with that?”

“Let’s go quickly.”

Yoo Sooyeon was smiling as she watched the scene. Ian laughed.

“I said tuna. No buying something else.” Han Yeorì declared.

“Understood.”

“Today has ended. Let’s go, Sooyeon!”

Han Yeorì and Yoo Sooyeon left arm in arm. Ian followed them. As he saw Han Yeorì’s excitement, someone’s face popped into his head.

If it were him, he would say this.

‘Crockta! Nothing else *dot!* Tuna *dot!*’

Ian stopped in his tracks. Would Tiyo know the taste of tuna? Somehow, it seemed like Ian’s boundaries of reality was shaking.

That’s right.

Ian looked at Han Yeorì who was beckoning to him. It was the reason why he fought against users in Elder Lord, and wore a headband to get along with NPCs.

“Boss-nim.”

Ian’s pace increased.

There were people who were important to him. They might just be characters in the game, but they occupied a place in his heart just like the people in front of him. If something happened to Tiyo, he would really be upset.

Suddenly, Yoo Sooyeon hit the shoulder of a passerby. The passerby cursed in a low voice.

Yoo Sooyeon apologized, “Ah, I’m sorry.”

Ian thought as he watched the man pull away. It was an unavoidable instinct to protect his precious ones.

CHAPTER 88

THE BLACK FOREST (1)

“Thank you again. I won’t forget your help. I will send messengers to Nameragon and Spinoa.”

Nadia’s expression was somewhat disturbed as she spoke. It was due to the dark elf standing with them.

“It is the first time I’m leaving Nuridot. I’m really excited.”

Anor joined Crockta and Tiyo’s party.

He had awakened the power of a necromancer that his mother had left him. At the same time, his identity as a dark elf was thrown away. He released everything that had accumulated in the meantime. A person who gave up being a dark elf, that was Anor.

There was also the tragedy that occurred at the town hall. As he left the hall, he took the orcs that infiltrated the town and turned them into his puppets. However, he deliberately didn’t kill some orc warriors. He left alone through the barrier outside the town.

The surviving orcs once again attacked the town hall. The dark elves had to fight against the orc warriors themselves.

Using the advantage of numbers, they were able to overpower the orcs. However, the fact that the orcs were an elite tribe warriors while the dark elves were people unfamiliar with fighting still held true. Multiple lives were given up in exchange for their resistance. Countless casualties had occurred.

Anor just shrugged when questioned about this. Perhaps it was a bonus.

Nadia knew that he had been persecuted due to being a dark elf and his dead mother having the bloodline of a necromancer, so she couldn’t blame him. She was also complicit. Of course, the other dark elves didn’t think so. The object of dislike had turned into hatred. In particular, those who lost family members in the town hall wanted to jump at Anor.

Nadia spoke to Anor, "Anor."

"Well, sh..."

"Take care of yourself."

"Ba... no, no, yes. Well..."

The shock from the hall had been so great that profanity was an automatic reflex.

"Then we will be going. Stay alive. Bul'tar!"

"Take care. Don't discriminate against other species *dot!*"

Crockta and Tiyo said their final words. Nadia nodded. Anor just nodded instead of saying goodbye. Then they turned around. For the man who had been persecuted for life in Nuridot, this was his first time leaving for the outside world.

Nadia prayed to the gods as she watched them walk away.

The honorable orc, Crockta. The cute but macho Tiyo.

"Anor, is this the first time you're leaving Nuridot? Kiki, aren't you a hillbilly?"

"This crazy dwarf... ah no... I'm sorry."

"Were you going to curse me just then *dot?*"

"I'm not sure... why do I keep doing this?"

"This bastard! Come here!"

"I-I'm sorry!"

In addition, the dark elf who reflexively cursed, Anor. Nadia could feel that these three were the key to the future of the north. But when she saw Tiyo hitting Anor, she started to become worried about the future of the north.

"God help them."

And protect our dark elves from the mad chieftain. Nadia once again prayed.



Crockta, Tiyo, and Anor built up a reputation for helping the dark elves in trouble as they headed towards Nameragon. Now the dark elves in the north started to know their names.

“It would be good if Third Dragon was also together with us,” Anor touched his necklace as he spoke.

He had buried Third Dragon at Nuridot Forest. Then he made the necklace out of one of Third Dragon’s teeth.

“By the way, when are we arriving in Nameragon?” Anor asked.

He was a dark elf, but he knew nothing about the geography of the north. Crockta checked on the map.

“We will arrive at Nameragon once we cross this mountain.”

There was a high mountain in front of them. It would take too long to go around. In addition, there was something unique about it.

“If we try to cross this mountain... we’ll have to go through the Black Forest.”

“Black Forest?”

“Yes. There is no explanation about why it is called the Black Forest.”

Crockta checked the map again before putting it away. It was a map of the north that he received from Nadia. It was much more detailed than the previous one. According to the map, it would take a day or two to reach Nameragon.

“The Black Forest?” suddenly asked Anor.

“Why, do you know it *dot*?”

“I’ve heard about it. It’s said that the Black Forest is dark...”

“Is that it?” Anor adjusted his ears. He looked up at the sky like he was recalling a distant memory. “It’s said that a hermit lives in the Black Forest.”

“A hermit?”

“Yes. He used to appear in the past, but I think he has been hiding lately... I don’t know the details. That is the only thing I remember about the Black Forest.”

Hermit of the Black Forest, it was a very romantic name.

“Won’t it be interesting?”

“That’s right.”

Crockta grinned. In the world of Elder Lord, a new adventure would begin once one ended. The Black Forest was waiting for them.

[It is hard to meet the hermit of the Black Forest.]

The system message resurfaced after a long time. Was there going to be a quest to find the hermit?

[He has a mighty power and is friendly to anyone. If you meet him, you will be able to get his help.]

[The meeting itself is a reward, so there will be no reward for finding him.]

Crockta frowned.

[But I prepared a small quest for your hard work in finding the hermit.]

[The hermit of the Black Forest isn't a human, elf, orc or gnome.]

[If you meet him and please him, you will be given a new skill.]

He didn't understand but there were more reasons to meet the hermit of the Black Forest.

"Heh, another adventure is waiting for me dot. Hey, foul-mouthed person!"

"I'm not a foul-mouthed person!"

"Don't lie."

"I'm really not..."

"Foul-mouthed person, do you want to make a bet? Who will find the hermit of the Black Forest first *dot*?!"

Then Tiyo started running towards the mountain, Anor followed after him. Crockta quickly trailed after them. They reached the Black Forest in an instant. And at the very beginning of the forest...

They met an ogre.

"...Heok, heok." Tiyo was catching his breath from running up the steep mountain. A gigantic mass was sitting in front of them. Tiyo started trembling. "Wow, is that guy the hermit?"

"I-I'm not sure."

The message window said that the hermit of the Black Forest wasn't a human, elf, gnome, or orc. If so, maybe he was an ogre. The ogre was doing something. It slowly turned its head. There was blood around the ogre's mouth.

"Grrr."

The eyes of the ogre became ferocious as it found its targets.

“It doesn’t seem like it *dot*.”

The ogre got up, with the body of the bear it had been eating was at its feet. In the real world, bears were dominant predators but in the world of Elder Lord, they were just snacks for ogres.

Crockta pulled out his greatsword. Anor was still reluctant to use the power of a necromancer, so he was forced to step behind.

“Anor, please step back. I am going to solve this.”

“Is it okay?”

Crockta smiled instead of answering. Of course, the ogre was a powerful monster. Organized troops were required to defeat it. Crockta had met a group of ogres at Quantas and had barely defeated them with the support of the gnomes garrison.

But now it was different. Crockta was no longer an ordinary warrior.

“Huhu, Crockta’s abilities can’t be ignored.”

Tiyo folded his arms and settled in to watch Crockta fight. Crockta prided himself on his skills and lifted the greatsword.

The ogre approached Crockta with a distorted face. The ground shook wildly with every step. This was the power of an ogre. However, it wouldn’t be a big battle. Now his greatsword could be freely manipulated as it headed towards the ogre.

Take a look, Black Forest. Hermit of the Black Forest. His greatsword would kill this ogre, just like its name. No one could stop him!

“Bul’tarrrr!”

Crockta ran forward The ogre’s fist flew. Crockta grinned. And...

He was hit by the fist.

“Cough!”

Crockta flew through the air towards the spot where he had jumped.

Cheolbudok!

It was a psychological shock, as well as a physical one. Crockta couldn't stand up for a while.

Tiyo sighed, "Should I be laughing or worried...?"

Crockta curled up from the pain caused by those words.

"Grrr..."

The ogre was approaching them. Tiyo lifted General. Crockta got back up. He raised his hand to stop Tiyo.

"This is my fight."

"Are you okay *dot*?"

"I just made a mistake."

Crockta once again raised Ogre Slayer. This was a fight for his pride. Crockta vowed to end the ogre as he rushed forward. The ogre grabbed a club and confronted Crockta. The two weapons met. It was a tremendous force.

Crockta pretended to lure the ogre into a power struggle, then turned to destroy the ogre's balance. Then he stabbed into a gap.

"Kuweeeoooh!"

However, the ogre's kick was also heading towards Crockta's abdomen. It was a quick reaction rate. Crockta's sword sliced the ogre's side while the ogre kicked Crockta's abdomen. Both of them stepped back at the same time.

"...Hoo."

Crockta raised his greatsword.

This ogre was different from the ones he met before. The movements were fast and contained techniques. It was much more efficient than the ogres who only fought ignorantly with strength. It was like an ogre who learned martial arts.

Crockta's eyes became cautious. It was also the same for the ogre. It thought of Crockta as a plain orc, but it realized that this orc was different from the others. The strength and skills exceeded the orcs that it knew.

Furthermore, the orc cut its skin. It meant that the orc's swordsmanship had at least reached the pinnacle level.

The two look at each other and laughed. They had met a rival here.

"How interesting."

"Grrr..."

The two collided again.

The blade swept past the nose. The club slid over the head. Both of their attacks missed each other by a hair. If Crockta tried to cut the neck, the club would aim for the abdomen. If he tried to stab the leg, the club would aim for his head. The fierce fighting continued.

He hadn't expected to have such a high-level confrontation with an ogre.

Crockta grinned. The ogre also smiled. Then they wielded their weapons towards each other again.

Leyteno's Greatsword Technique passed by the club, the tip of the sword moving like a snake. It was a movement difficult to imagine for a greatsword. Its target was the heart of the ogre.

".....!"

The ogre also showed unpredictable movements for its size. It twisted its body and avoided the tip of the sword. It lifted a hand from the club and swung it at Crockta. An unexpected blow. At that moment, Crockta moved his greatsword.

He grabbed the ogre's massive arm and pulled it. He used inertia to throw the ogre's body. The ogre lost its balance and fell due to Crockta.

"Ohhhhhhhh!"

The giant ogre that was double Crockta's size. Crockta threw the huge body down.

Kuuong!

Due to the big size, the ogre's head immediately bumped against the ground. It was also against hard rocks. Blood spilled from the ogre's head and it lost consciousness.

Crockta took a deep breath.

"Hoo..."

Then he raised his right hand. A posture of victory.

Tiyo and Anor clapped.

"It was a tremendous battle and that ogre is very good *dot*."

"It was incredible. Furthermore, you won against an ogre!"

Crockta held Ogre Slayer. Then he looked down at the unconscious ogre.

"....."

Crockta placed Ogre Slayer on his back.

"Just go." For some reason, he didn't want to kill this ogre.

Tiyo nodded in agreement at the manly sensibility. "Huhu, he felt it."

"Felt what?" Anor was confused. Tiyo slapped Anor's back and said, "A man's sympathy *dot*."

Anor was confused. Tiyo clicked his tongue at Anor's expression.

"You won't understand..."

At that moment, Anor was filled with the desire to curse Tiyo.

"You, you just wanted to curse, right? Isn't that right? Isn't it?"

“...No.”

“You are an elf with a double personality!”

“Ah, no!”

“Ehehe. Try swearing. Where is it? Try it *dot*!”

“Shit...”

They left the ogre and headed deeper into the Black Forest. This time they met a goblin.

“.....?”

The goblin was sitting on a rock with a zen-like expression. Crockta’s group stopped and the goblin slowly opened his eyes. His eyes were filled with giddiness.

“Kieeeeek.”

The goblin rose from his spot. A short bow was held in his hand. He loaded an arrow and aimed it at Crockta.

“...It is my turn *dot*.”

Tiyo stepped forward, holding General in his hands. The goblin and gnome’s eyes met.

Tiyo cried out, “This forest, it is interesting!”

Tiyo raised General. At that moment, the goblin’s arrow flew towards Tiyo’s head. Tiyo avoided the attack by rolling on the floor. Then he immediately retaliated. General’s bullets flew towards the goblin.

His target was the goblin’s head. However, the goblin just moved his head and avoided the attack.

“Ah...!”

The goblin grinned and said, “It is still insufficient.”

“.....!”

“You have no heart in your attack *kyak*.”

It was a goblin who knew how to speak the human language like Kyawak who Crockta met in the past.

“Don’t make me laugh!

Tiyo fired General again. But the goblin just used minimal movements to avoid the bullets. Splendid rays of light filled the Black Forest.

“A real shooter doesn’t fire like that.” The goblin pulled back his bowstring. His short bow trembled as it was pulled back to the fullest extent. The goblin’s arrow aimed exactly at Tiyo.

“This is heart *kyak*!”

The arrow was shot and a storm appeared.

CHAPTER 89

THE BLACK FOREST (2)

An unbelievable storm of light struck. At the center of the storm was a furious arrow.

“Waaaaah!”

Tiyo barely avoided the arrow but he fell into the forest in the aftermath of the storm. The whirlwind swept the spot where Tiyo had been standing. Tiyo lay down in the collapsed wreckage of the forest.

Crockta and Anor froze.

“Tiyo!”

Tiyo was lying down like he was dead. His fingertips moved. His eyelids shook before he slowly opened his eyes. Tiyo staggered as he raised his body. He was still holding onto General tightly.

“Don’t interfere *dot...*”

Tiyo glared at the goblin. The goblin still had a relaxed expression on his face. Rather, this time he raised a hand like he was yielding. It provoked Tiyo.

“You might be confident but I am a gnome soldier from Quantas.”

Tiyo aimed General’s muzzle.

“You will regret the day you upset me *dot.*”

But the goblin didn’t care. He just laughed at Tiyo. The ridiculing smile of the goblin further stimulated Tiyo. The goblin frowned and said to Tiyo.

“Let’s go, garrison gnome, I’ll make you regret it kyak! Don’t just talk with your mouth kyahahak!”

“This bastard!”

Tiyo rushed forward and fired General. It was an assault meant to contain the enemy while he approached. But the goblin didn't allow him to get closer. It was like teleportation as the goblin moved backward, sideways and even over some trees. Every time Tiyo's barrage stopped, the goblin fired an arrow.

Tiyo avoided any fatal shots but the arrows tore his skin. The number of wounds gradually increased.

"Kuock..."

Tiyo stared at the wound on his arm with wild eyes.

"I have to acknowledge your confidence despite your lack of skills kyahahak!"

".....!"

"Your shooting skills are the worst kyak!"

Tiyo's hands shook. He was the best shooter in Quantas. He had been recognized as the best every time he fired. Yet this goblin was hurting his pride.

Tiyo nodded. "Okay, Goblin."

He moved his feet until they were shoulder width apart and stood firmly on the ground.

"Let me give you a taste of my shooting *dot*."

"It is in vain kyak!"

Tiyo's General aimed at the goblins. The goblin also aimed at Tiyo with his arrow.

"Never interfere *dot*...!"

The situation had become worse than he thought so Crockta had tried to intervene with his greatsword. However, Tiyo had a determined expression on his face. Crockta was forced to take a step back.

Suddenly, the wind blew. The Black Forest shook. The wind twisted the branches. The leaves fell to the floor. The leaves fell down between Tiyo and the goblin. Like a joke of

fate, the leaves passed through the point where they were aiming. The moment that their view of each other was blocked...

The arrows and bullets fired towards each other.

Susususuk.

Shyaaaaaah!

At the same time, the goblin and Tiyo's body twisted. The arrow narrowly passed by Tiyo's cheek. The magic bullet passed by the goblin's side and broke the tree.

".....!"

None of his bullets touched the goblin. The goblin laughed and did a thumbs down towards Tiyo.

"This is the difference between you and me kyak."

The goblin laughed. At that moment.

Jeeeok.

The tree that Tiyo's magic bullet broke started to tilt slowly. The tree cast a shadow over the goblin. The goblin's face stiffened.

Tiyo said. "Goblin, you might have learned the official language but..."

Tiyo imitated the goblin's actions by lowering his thumb. At the same time, the tree slammed into the goblin.

"It seems like you haven't learned physics *dot*."

The goblin moaned as it was crushed by the tree.



They passed through the Black Forest and met many monsters.

There was an ogre who learned martial arts, the goblin archer was followed by a lich

who summoned skeleton warriors, there was a troll that skillfully wielded a giant axe, a ninja direwolf who struck in the darkness and a lizardman who used a spear. They had to deal with all types of enemies.

All of them weren't ordinary monsters. They all had unique skills, like specialists pursuing their own roads.

"The Black Forest is a really strange place..." muttered Tiyo.

He had just knocked out a kobold archer. The kobold was a bipedal creature with the head of a dog, and it hid in various parts of the forest and fired at them before hiding again. One would be okay, but there were many of them.

Tiyo used his sophisticated shooting to hit the real one and the illusions. In the end, the kobold had admitted defeat after being hit and collapsing.

"Doesn't it seem like we're being tested *dot*?"

The level of the creatures kept increasing.

"What type of hermit is living in a place like the Black Forest?"

"Be careful. It's time for new enemies to emerge."

"Uhh... I'm scared."

They had walked for a long time after suppressing the kobold. According to the pattern, it was time for someone new to appear and stop them. What type of enemy would it be this time? They felt a mix of expectations and tiredness. They moved slowly through the forest.

An unfamiliar landscape appeared in front of them.

"You came up to here."

A young man was sitting in a rocking chair and reading a book. He glanced at Crockta's party over his spectacles. It was a young man with pitch black hair.

"It has been a long time since I've had visitors."

At first, his appearance looked like an elf, but this man had a face that was a level higher than that. He put away his book and rose from his seat. A beautiful man.

He placed the book on his chest and said, "Then I will ask a question."

Crockta's groups looked at each other at the sudden words. He continued speaking.

"I had a dream a long time ago."

".....?"

It was suddenly a story about a dream. They were silent as they listened to the man's voice.

"In the dream, I was a father with a son. He was a lovely son, and I felt like I could give everything in the world for him. Then one day, I found out that my child was sick. He was struck with a terminal illness that would slowly but surely lead to his death."

His face and voice were calm.

"It was such a scary disease that I thought it was a 'promised death'. My child's death was promised and no one could avoid it. It was the worst illness that caused terrible pain that no one could bear. That's why I decided. Rather than let my son die in agony, it was better for me to end his life."

The man closed his eyes.

"But when I talked about this, everybody called me crazy. This was because there were few people who know about the 'promised death.' I said everything was for my child, but they didn't listen to me and exiled me so that I couldn't see my son. It was a thorough isolation. Now I will ask."

They couldn't figure out what he would ask. Crockta listened closely.

The man asked, "What do you think about me in the dream?"

It was a comprehensive question. He didn't ask if what he thought was right or wrong, but wondered what they thought about him. Crockta touched his chin. It felt like a test, just like the fights they encountered as they passed through the Black Forest. If so, was this man the hermit of the Black Forest and was this the ultimate test?

The first one to answer was Anor. "It is too much. Even if your child is sick... what if your child wants to live for longer? Wanting to kill... maybe talk to your child..."

"A child wouldn't understand what the 'promised death' is. Wouldn't it be wrong to cause him pain just because of the future?"

"What about the child? Even if it is painful, the child could want to live more..."

"A child wouldn't understand it."

"What..."

"How terrible the pain is."

"....."

"Is that the end of your answer?"

Anor wasn't able to say anything more and closed his mouth.

Tiyo replied next, "You are foolish in your dream *dot!*"

"Why?"

"Anyway, life is about being alone! If there is the promised death, that is your son's share. You don't need to kill him. Besides, killing the child is simply futilely meddling in his fate!"

"Hrmm, is it like that?"

"That's right *dot.*"

"You don't understand the dream."

"What are you saying *dot!*"

"My son fell in the water. If the child drowns, will you let that be the child's share?"

"That is a different story *dot!*"

“It is the same story.”

Tiyo moaned and shook his head. The man started mumbling to himself.

Now it was Crockta’s turn. The hermit of the Black Forest looked at Crockta. He seemed to be waiting for the next answer. Crockta thought carefully.

The promised death. Somehow, it was a familiar notion. It was similar to what he heard from the desperate demon sleeping at his waist and the orc’s story about the nameless god. The dream that the man was talking about felt like a dream.

Those who were desperate always had the same reason.

“It was scary.”

Crockta spoke up. The hermit of the Black Forest shook his head.

“No, the child didn’t understand it.”

“Not the child.”

Crockta looked at the hermit of the Black Forest. It was an emotionless face where no feelings could be found. Like a doll. Within the dark eyes that didn’t show any contrast, was there a human mind that he could sympathize with?

“You were scared.”

At that moment, the hermit’s face seemed to shake. But then his face became still again.

Crockta continued speaking, “In a world where you can’t understand the promised death, you were struggling with fear when you discovered your child’s ending.”

“.....”

“You trembled with fear as you understood the true reality, and spent many nights before making the tragic decision for your child.” Crockta closed his eyes. “Just you.”

He was a soldier fighting on the front lines. Therefore, he often went to a counselor to have his mental state checked. In the process, it was easy to know their consultation

strategy. There was the first step that the counselor had to take when dealing with clients. It was to build up rapport! The building of mutual trust through empathy!

Crockta said with tearful eyes, "You must've been very lonely. Really..."

Then Crockta squinted at the hermit's expression. The hermit of the Black Forest's face didn't change.

Damn, it was a failure. The moment that Crockta was about to modify his strategy,

Churuk!

A tear flowed from the hermit's eyes.

".....!"

The expression still looked like ice but tears were flowing down from both eyes. He realized the change and stuttered.

"Ah..."

He caught a teardrop with his fingertips and stared at it. He was still expressionless, but he somehow gave off a lonely feeling.

His eyes turned to Crockta again. Crockta felt like an intense scorer who broke past the goalkeeper and finished the game smoothly.

"I also can't understand the promised death. But I can see that you had to make a really lonely and painful decision in your dream. I am really sorry."

Then he stared up at the sky. It was great directing.

The hermit stared at Crockta's face. Then he opened his mouth. "Yes."

He waved his hand over his face and it became clean. It was magic.

"It would have been really painful and lonely."

The corners of the hermit's mouth slowly went up. It was a beautiful smile.

“I’m glad to know you.”

He clapped and the landscape changed. Crockta’s party was petrified. The scenery in front of them was no longer the forest. It was a huge castle.

“My name is Gushantimur. Travelers, welcome to my lair.”

“...Oh my god.”

[Oh my god.]

The system was also filled with admiration.

[I pay my respects to you, the one who has melted the heart of the cool beauty, the black dragon Gushantimur!]

CHAPTER 90

THE BLACK FOREST (3)

[Unknown mysterious skill (??? rating) has been obtained.]

[It can only be used after leaving Gushantimur's lair.]

The system didn't give him the skill name. It was pending until he left the lair.

"Defeating my guardians was a great feat. Most people give up and run away in the middle," said Gushantimur

He had felt the terrible power of Gushantimur after the real landscape of this place was revealed. It was a dragon's majesty that would cause someone to tremble in fear just being in its presence.

"You're a dragon?" asked Anor.

The strong magic that changed the landscape in an instant, the terms 'lair' and 'guardians' and the fearful atmosphere truly matched the characteristics of a dragon.

Gushantimur nodded. "That's right. You, who has the blood of a necromancer."

".....!"

"A necromancer contained the ancient lineage of a god. I have never seen such a thick concentration in the blood for many years."

Gushantimur raised a hand to his face. It was the face of a young man, but there was a sense of longevity about him. Gushantimur grinned.

"You should be proud."

Anor's eyes widened. It was a shameful power that he had covered up for all his life. Those who could raise the dead were often a target of fear for other people. Even his

mother had given up the bloodline and sealed it.

However, this mighty dragon said to be proud of it.

“The power to connect the dead to this world isn’t within the strength of a mortal. But an old god who is troubled by those who suffer due to eternal parting has given you strength. This is the mercy and blessing of a god.”

“Ah...” Anor scratched his head. He had never heard such a compliment and didn’t know how to respond. He just bowed with a red face. “Thank you.”

“But it is lacking.”

“Huh?”

“The most you can do now is raise bodies and learn to control them. You haven’t reached true necromancy.”

“.....!”

This time Gushantimur’s eyes headed towards Tiyo.

“Tiyo, brave son of the gnome, Hedor.”

Tiyo’s eyes widened. “You know my father?”

“You are lacking compared to your father.”

“.....!”

The dragon not only knew Tiyo’s father’s name, but also said that Tiyo was lacking compared to him. It was as if he knew Tiyo’s father well.

“The artifact that you are using has no limit on its power. But you have already set a limit in your heart.”

“What are you saying *dot!*”

“General is a Dragon Light General, a god’s weapon created by the gold dragon Abogullad.”

“A dragon’s weapon?”

“That’s right. Raise your own vessel”

Tiyo staggered like he was shocked. “M-My vessel is small *dot...*”

He had lived as a macho person. Everybody praised him as a man with large vessel. But the black dragon pointed out his vessel.

“General’s true name is ‘Dragonslayer’.”

“.....!”

“It is a dragon weapon designed to kill dragons. But you can’t catch an ogre with it, let alone a dragon.”

Tiyo flopped down. His eyes shook wildly.

Gushantimur’s eyes now turned towards Crockta. Crockta prepared himself. The system said that the meeting itself was a reward. Gushantimur might’ve seemed stricken at first, but he had given them important facts that would eventually become a foundation for their growth. Those who didn’t listen to him wouldn’t grow further.

Crockta faced Gushantimur and waited for what he would point out. Gushantimur opened his mouth, “Wonderful.”

“.....!”

“Keep trying hard. More than this.”

Crockta grabbed Gushantimur who was turning around. “Excuse me, point out something.”

“There is nothing.”

“Don’t lie.”

“...It is okay?”

“Yes. Please point out what I am lacking. Unreservedly!”

“Hmm, if you want...”

This dragon was a surprisingly good person. He gazed at Crockta coolly and opened his mouth. “You have reached the Pinnacle level.”

“That’s accurate.”

Pinnacle! It had been Crockta’s target ever since Hoyt had first showed it to him. It was an area he had barely reached after defeating the behemoth. It was difficult at first but he gradually got used to it. Now all of Crockta’s movements contained the enlightenment of the Pinnacle.

“Look beyond that.”

Crockta’s eyes widened. As the name implied, he thought Pinnacle was the end. The power of the Pinnacle was enough to defeat most enemies, but there was more beyond that?

The mentors who taught Crockta were Lenox, Hoyt and Baek Hanho. And they had only mentioned the Pinnacle. There might be high and low abilities in that area, but none of them had seen beyond it.

It was fairly unexplored.

“The Pinnacle state is to become one with the world.” Gushantimur said, “But beyond that, there is an area where you can wield the world.”

“.....!”

“That is your goal.”

Crockta’s body trembled in anticipation. He wanted to swing his sword straight away. Move the world according to his own will. Was that even possible?

“What is it called?”

“That...” Gushantimur grinned. “The people who managed to do it, they were all lauded as Heroes.”

Hero rating!

The Despairing Demon's Mouth belt that he was wearing was also a Hero rank item. At the time, the power of the demon was terrifying. If he hadn't convinced the demon then Quantess would've disappeared from the map.

It was possible for individuals to have such a mighty power. The next step after Pinnacle was the Hero rating.

"I didn't think you would be able to beat all my guardians. But in the end, we all have endless possibilities for growth," said Gushantimur

Then the doors of the castle opened.

".....!"

The creatures they beat were gathered there.

The ogre who cornered Crockta with martial arts, the goblin archer who played with Tiyo, the lich who showed a higher level of undead magic than Anor, the axe-wielding troop and lizardman spearman, the direwolf who attacked them like a ninja and the kobold archer were all gathered there.

"Grrr."

The ogre discovered Crockta and raised a thumb. Crockta also responded with his thumb. The ogre had a bandage wrapped around its head.

"T-that guy..."

Tiyo pointed at the goblin. The goblin wearing a splint sat down on the ground. He found Tiyo and made a cutting motion across his neck. He would finish Tiyo next time!

"My guardians are all those aiming for a higher world."

The black dragon Gushantimur liked to stay in this forest and help others grow. But that didn't mean everyone could get his help. They had to pass the test of his guardians. And the guardians would gradually build up their levels from the test.

"How about it, Travelers?" asked Gushantimur.

"Won't you knock down the wall that you see here?"

It was a sweet seduction. The guardians were staring at them, as if daring them to come.

“In fact, the truly strong ones were considerate towards you.”

Beyond the guardians was a huge cyclops. He looked at Crockta and laughed. Then he stroked the head of the ogre that Crockta defeated.

“.....!”

Crockta’s eyebrows twitched.

“Are you confident to beat them with your strength?”

Crockta looked at Tiyo and Anor in turn. The reactions of the two were different. Tiyo’s eyes were burning with fighting spirit. Anor slightly shook his head with a frightened expression.

Tiyo said, “You must be scared *dot*.”

Anor reflexively replied, “No, you jerk!”

“Then let’s go.”

“Ah... ah?”

Tiyo pushed Anor. Crockta followed behind them. They entered the lair of the dragon Gushantimur.



Gushantimur’s castle was magnificent. Who could imagine that such a huge castle would be hidden in the forest? It was an area hidden by magic, just like Shakan’s fortress. As expected from a dragon’s lair, it contained gold and silver.

“I once lived in a cave like any other dragon.”

Gushantimur explained as he guided them, “But I realized after experiencing an incident. The real treasure isn’t gold but friends.”

“.....!”

The words that old men always said when they became drunk!

‘Friends are treasure.’

But he couldn’t help being convinced as he gazed at the young beauty against the backdrop of the wonderful castle.

“So I made a castle using gold and treasures. I became friends with those seeking enlightenment after reaching the limit. One or two visited me, and the number of friends gradually increased.”

There were weapons everywhere in his castle. And the creatures were polishing and sharpening their skills.

“Why are there no humans, elves, or orcs?”

“Everybody left.” There was no change in Gushantimur’s face, but Crockta thought he somehow looked lonely. “All of them left after achieving a certain level in order to gain wealth and honor. But these guys are different.”

“.....”

“If they go outside, they might be hunted as unusual monsters. They have no place to go. They have transcended the limits of their species and wish to seek a larger world, but that world only despises them as creatures. They have already tasted the wider world and can’t be satisfied with hunting and looting like their people, so there is no place for them to go.”

Gushantimur laughed calmly.

“I will keep them with me until the day they can be recognized. They will never betray me and I will also never betray them.”

Crockta realized something. This dragon wasn’t just a dragon. He was a hot-blooded dragon. Who could call this man a cold-blooded reptile?

“Gushantimur, we won’t stay here for a long time.”

“I guessed so.”

“But we want to be your friend.”

Gushantimur burst out laughing. His laughter was clear.

“Crockta, you are saying strange things.”

“What...”

“Aren’t we already friends?”

“.....!”

Warm. This man, he was warmer than Crockta expected. They were already friends with this warm man.

Crockta nodded.

“Now, my friends are waiting for you. Unpack and come out.”

Crockta’s group unpacked their belongings in the room that Gushantimur guided them to. Then they immediately went outside while armed. Outside, spars were already in full swing.

“Come.”

Gushantimur was standing there after changing his clothing. He was dressed in clothes that allowed easy movement. When they first met, he seemed like a scholar or magician. But a sharp momentum was coming from him now that he was holding a sword.

“Anor, you should learn from this friend.”

It was the bony lich. It laughed.

“Hiik...!”

“Your biggest problem as a necromancer is your timid nature.” Anor was speechless as the lich placed an arm around his shoulder. The skull was terrifying for him.

“Become friends with death.”

“Kelkelkel! Do you trust me? Kelkelkel!”

“Aack!”

Anor moaned at the lich’s laugh. Thus, Anor was dragged away by the lich. The skeletons followed them.

Now it was Tiyo’s turn.

“Tiyo.”

“Um.”

“Your weakness is your small vessel.”

“What?” declared Tiyo.

He seemed to have recovered from being told that he had a small vessel.

“What are you saying *dot*! I am a man who never had a reputation for being small *dot*! This is the first time I’ve heard that my vessel is small. It really is the first time. Hahaha, how funny *dot*. A person with a strange dream is calling me small *dot*! I am someone who received 500 medals *dot*! Take back what you just said! I’m not small! I am Tiyo who joined the Quantas garrison since I was young...!”

Gushantimur looked at Crockta. Crockta nodded.

“Isn’t it accurate?”

“It’s accurate.”

“Don’t agree with him Crockta!”

Gushantimur coughed.

“Cough, well there seems to be a misunderstanding. The thing I am talking about isn’t your nature. Well, now that I see your personality...”

“What *dot*?”

“Don’t worry. In any case, the small vessel is your imagination. Lend me General for a moment.”

Tiyo handed General over to Gushantimur with a sour face. Gushantimur held General. At that moment,

“.....!”

General changed. General was in the form of a long rifle, but then the muzzle widened, the column expanded and it took the appearance of a bigger weapon. It was like a cannon.

“T-this is.....”

“General is as strong as your imagination and willpower.”

Then Gushantimur aimed the muzzle towards the air and pulled the trigger. The magic power around General was sucked in fiercely. A light emerged from the barrel and a mass of energy was fired.

Roaaaaaar!

The magic shell flew into the sky. Then the light flashed and there was a huge explosion.

Kwaang!

The colorful magic power in the sky looked like fireworks.

“Unbelievable...”

Tiyo had been using General for a long time, so he couldn’t help staring with a frozen expression.

“T-this is...”

“This is the true power of the weapon. The Light Dragon General is incomparably powerful when I use it.”

General reverted back to the form of a rifle.

“Here.”

“I-I will do that guise again. I will make an even better cannon! Amazing *dot!*”

“It is up to you. Tiyo.”

“Ohhh!”

Tiyo took the rifle and examined it. However, General looked exactly the same as before.

“The one who will teach you is the great goblin, Kiao.”

“You finally came *kyakk!*” It was the goblin that showed Tiyo the storm archery. Kaio walked forward with his short bow.

“I already defeated that guy *dot!*”

“Tiyo. Take a look at Kiao.”

“What?”

Kiao shrugged.

“Shooting the tree and knocking him out is praiseworthy. Indeed, it is the move of a soldier used to actual fighting. But if Kiao had used his true strength, you wouldn’t be standing here.” Gushantimur declared. “If he really fired the arrow with all his strength, your body would’ve disappeared in that spatiotemporal storm without a trace.”

“.....!”

A spatiotemporal storm! Tiyo couldn’t refute it. Certainly, the goblin had the power to create a storm with his bow and arrow. But creating a spatiotemporal storm!

“Kiao is also a great mentor. His power will help with General. Learn well.”

Kiao giggled and poked Tiyo. “Let’s go *kyak!* Harsh training awaits *kyaak!*”

“Ohh... this bastard...”

“Call me Master, *kyak!*”

“Shut up Goblin! Teach me properly *dot!*”

“*Kyak kyak kyak*, you are a cheeky disciple!”

Now Crockta was left alone. Gushantimur’s eyes headed towards Crockta. He raised his sword.

“...Heh.”

Crockta grinned. He was expected it when he saw Gushantimur holding the sword. The black dragon Gushantimur would teach Crockta himself. Fighting spirit rose in Crockta’s chest. The opponent was a dragon. Could he cross blades with this opponent?

“Gushantimur. The name of my sword is Ogre Slayer.”

“A great sword.”

“But I might change the name today.” Crockta pulled out his greatsword. Ogre Slayer cried out like it had been waiting. “Into Dragon Slayer.”

A remark meant to provoke the dragon!

Gushantimur laughed. Then something flowed down.

“.....!”

Crockta trembled. Gushantimur smiled but his sword tip was touching Crockta’s neck. It was a stab wound. He hadn’t even noticed until a drop of warm blood flowed from his neck.

Gushantimur said, “First hit.”

Crockta couldn’t help smiling. He couldn’t imagine how many times he would die today.

CHAPTER 91

THE BLACK FOREST (4)

Crockta once again raised his body. Gushantimur declared, “1980.”

“...Hoo, hoo. Again.”

Crockta’s face was dripping with sweat. He was too tired to move. Every joint in his body was screaming. His neck was stiff from tension after being lightly cut by Gushantimur’s sword.

“Didn’t you say you would change your weapon into ‘Dragon Slayer’? Did you give up already?”

“Not yet!”

Crockta focused his mind. Ogre Slayer rose up and entered the realm of Pinnacle. He became one with the world. Time became slower. He woke up the laws of the world with his sword. He swung his greatsword with the desire to cut the enemy.

Gushantimur’s sword swung towards him. In this slow world, their hearts collided with each other. All types of sword roots existed in this world and they ran among them. The last thing left in the end was to unfold their swords.

“.....!”

As a natural consequence after the fighting ended, Crockta’s sword flew in the air while Gushantimur’s sword was pointed at Crockta’s chest. An overwhelming defeat with no excuses!

“1981,” said Gushantimur.

Crockta had died nearly 2,000 times today. Crockta took deep breaths. He recovered from his defeat. Looking back, he didn’t know how he should’ve responded. So instead of thinking, he raised the greatsword.

“Again.”

The other practitioners watched Crockta's limitless spirit with admiration. In particular, the ogre who first competed with Crockta admired Crockta's fighting spirit as he raised his fist.

There was no change in Gushantimur's expression. He just silently raised his sword. There wasn't a single drop of sweat on his body. He was a dragon but also an amazing swordsman. Crockta couldn't imagine how strong Gushantimur would be if he was turned into a god.

It provoked a desire to win rather than awe.

In the world of Elder Lord, he was able to endlessly renew his limits. He was an orc knocking down an ogre with a sword. It was the same for Shakan hunting the behemoth. He knocked down a strong monster with a bow.

Crockta was convinced that he could defeat Gushantimur.

"1982."

"Kuock..."

He spent time and effort. Yet it was insufficient.

"Again." Crockta raised his limp legs.

He knew the importance of repetition in training. It might be sufficient to kill the enemy with one hit, but that one strike required thousands of sunrises and sunsets. The one who wielded the sword one thousand times would win over someone who only wielded it once.

Gushantimur said, "It is up to here."

"Not yet."

"You will." Gushantimur put the sword away. "I can't fight anymore."

"You look fine."

"I'm hungry." Gushantimur said with a cold look, "The most important thing in training is rest and diet."

His advice was like the remark of a gym trainer; but it was reasonable, so Crockta nodded.

In no time, the sun was going down. The sunset at the horizon burned the sky. It was a beautiful twilight.

The other practitioners also returned to the castle. In the distance, Tiyo and the goblin were hitting each other.

Crockta arrived at the banquet room with Gushantimur. There was a long dining table with seats set up. Gushantimur sat down with Crockta, Tiyo, and Anor seated close to him. The chandelier in the banquet room scattered light like a waterfall. The fragmented light scattered over the food in the banquet hall, making them look more appetizing.

“Good food *dot*.”

“It is the work of my lizardman friend, a gourmet.”

Tiyo wrapped a napkin around his neck and imitated the manners of a gentleman. He ate a piece of meat and closed his eyes.

“Wow. What dish is this? The flavor is deep and so good.”

“It is gnome meat.”

“.....!”

Tiyo spat the meat out and glared at Gushantimur’s face. Gushantimur placed the meat in his mouth without changing his expression.

“A joke. It is beef.”

“This bastard... saying such awful things with a serious face...!” Tiyo paused for a moment. He rolled his eyes before suddenly laughing, “Hahahat! I see! Nice joke *dot*! Hahahat!”

Tiyo suddenly changed his stance. “It’s a joke, but it isn’t bad for this big Tiyo. Hahahat!”

Crockta realized that Tiyo was acting as someone with a big vessel. Tiyo spread his mouth wide open, poured the dish in, and swallowed it in one gulp. Gushantimur said, "You have a really large vessel."

"Hahat! That's right! You don't need to be surprised *dot*! I am a gnome with a big vessel!"

Tiyo shook his shoulders.

"....."

Crockta was thrilled. He once again gained enlightenment. The man who seemed cold could easily praise his opponent.

Truly, life was unpredictable. It wasn't what he expected and he had a whole new perspective. All of these things were cutting him into a tough man. It wasn't just Tiyo or Gushantimur. In the history of their lives, they were shaped by these things.

".....!"

That's right.

Everything in the world went back to causation. In the world, there was no effect without a cause.

Crockta suddenly looked at his fork. The chandelier light was reflecting over the sharp edges. The light dropping from the chandelier. That light came from a lamp that illuminated the inside. Crockta wielded his fork.

The world slowed. Crockta used the Pinnacle to pursue the piece of steak on Gushantimur's plate. Before, he used the power of Pinnacle by calculating the 'result'. But now he started to calculate the 'process' for defeating the enemy.

It was through inner reason, strong will and imagination!

The fork contained his enlightenment.

"....."

Gushantimur also defended with his fork.

The two forks crossed each other's plates. In this environment, Crockta went through many possibilities in his imagination, from taking away Gushantimur's steak, having his own stolen, sometimes making a mistake or maybe breaking each other's forks.

Then he placed his willpower into it. He twisted causation.

'The Pinnacle state is to become one with the world.'

Crockta recalled Gushantimur's words, 'But beyond that, there is an area where you can wield the world.'

The world convulsed. Suddenly, the steak was hanging from Crockta's fork. Gushantimur's fork stopped in the air. Crockta had robbed him of his steak.

"This..."

At that moment, Crockta obtained a clue to reach Hero rank. Beginning from small things to change the world, just like a butterfly's wings. This was the Hero territory.

"Kulkulkul!"

Now he wanted to swing his sword. Crockta laughed in a pleased way. "Gushantimur!"

"Um." Gushantimur had a stern expression. "If it is so delicious, you could've just asked for more."

".....!" Crockta denied it. "There is a misunderstanding...!"

Tiyo clicked his tongue. "No matter how hungry you are, it isn't polite to covet another person's food Crockta!"

"T-That isn't it."

But all the eyes around him were cold.

"Orc friend, *kyak!* You have learned the wrong manners *kyaak!*"

Even the goblin pointed out his manners. The ogre had a disappointed expression on his face. Public opinion was already against him. Crockta tried to protest but closed his mouth when he heard Anor's words.

“Please eat your own.”

He gave up arguing. Crockta looked down at his plate. The flavor was delicious. Crockta dropped his head and put the meat in his mouth.

“Bul’tar...”



“It is nice here,” Anor suddenly said.

They were staying in the same room. After leaving Nuridot, Gushantimur’s castle was strange for them who had been camping outside. He had just finished bathing and changing clothes, so Anor felt like a beautiful elf again as he saw his shiny skin. Light shone on his face.

Tiyo had also washed and changed into pajamas given by the castle, causing him to look like the child of a noble family.

“Yes!”

Crockta showed his tough face.

“I wish I could stay here...” muttered Anor.

But he knew that he couldn’t.

“We don’t have a lot of time to waste *dot*,” replied Tiyo.

“I see...”

After stopping by the Temple of the Fallen God in Nameragon, they had to seek the cooperation of the dark elves to deal with the Great Clan. They were enjoying a little peace right now, but a horrible war in the north was waiting for them.

“Crockta, when will we leave this place?”

Crockta closed his eyes and thought about a reply to Tiyo’s question. Staying here and training would be a great help. However, they couldn’t stay forever. It was a reasonable time scale.

“In up to a week.”

“A week...”

“That is enough to achieve some progress.” Tiyo nodded.

“I will be sorry to leave.” Tiyo said. It seemed like he already had an attachment to the goblin archer, Kiao.

“We can come back again.”

“Again...?”

“That’s right.” Crockta smiled and said, “After defeating the Great Clan and bringing peace to the north, we can come back here and spend a long break.”

“Hoh... good *dot*.”

“I’m really looking forward to it.” Anor laughed.

Tiyo declared, “At that time, I will become really strong and will break the nose of Kiao *dot*.”

“Kulkul, you can’t break it in a week?”

“I hate to admit it, but he is a great guy *dot*. Breaking his nose will be a hard feat to accomplish in just a week.”

Crockta agreed. Apart from Gushantimur, the other creatures were pursuing their own goals. There were countless hot-blooded people here in the Black Forest.

“It will be hard even if we are here for a month.”

He witnessed a new world, but he was still far from winning against Gushantimur. But one day, he would cross that insurmountable wall.

“Everybody, have strength.”

Anor got into bed in a calm manner. He seemed to have no thoughts in his head. He stretched out on the soft quilt.

“Tomorrow we need to train properly.”

“Yes.”

“I’m going to turn off the lights.”

“Good night. Hihit.”

Thus, their first day in the Black Forest ended.



Time passed.

Crockta could now last much longer than before. Gushantimur stopped counting his deaths.

Crockta swung the greatsword and pressured Gushantimur.

Now he was able to switch the Pinnacle state on and off in an instant. However, Gushantimur was really tough. After truly knowing the Pinnacle state, Crockta realized what an exceptional swordsman he was.

But even Gushantimur hadn’t reached the true Hero state. How much stronger was the power of the Hero state?

“Crockta, your goal is to kill the chieftain.”

“Yes.”

The more he knew, the more he became determined that the chieftain should be removed. He was a danger not just to the north, but the southern continent as well.

“It won’t be easy.”

“Would even you have a hard time?”

“Maybe.”

Crockta stopped his sword. He hadn’t expected the great chieftain to be so strong.

“He is stronger than Gushantimur?”

“That can’t be.” Gushantimur took a deep breath. “But there are various ways of becoming stronger. Your path isn’t the only way to increase in power.”

“What are you talking about?”

“You will soon find out.” Gushantimur wielded his blade. It hit the greatsword. There was a metallic echo. “Now focus on me.”

“Kulkul, understood.”

Crockta and Gushantimur competed. Crockta gradually started to seem like an opponent. There were parts where Gushantimur weakened, but it was true that Crockta had greatly developed.

It was the same for Tiyo.

“Ayaaat! General’s evolution!”

Tiyo closed his eyes and focused on General.

Clink, clink!

General’s appearance slowly changed. The muzzle opened and the barrel expanded. General’s new look was completed.

General Vulcan! (Probably something similar to this.)

“I failed to make a cannon, but this is also cool.” Tiyo aimed Vulcan at Kiao who still looked displeased.

“Don’t think about such tricks *kyak!* You have to pursue the strongest heart *kyak!*”

“Noisy *dot*, if one doesn’t push you then I will use two. If two doesn’t work then I will use four then eight!”

“Stubborn gnome *kyak!*”

“Stiff goblin!”

The two glared at each other. Kiao shook his head and pulled out an arrow. A goblin who pursued becoming the strongest! A fearsome momentum came from him. It was like a dragon's mouth appeared behind him. The force of a storm was condensed in Kiao's arrow and aimed at Tiyo.

Tiyo didn't stay still either. He aimed Vulcan at Kiao. Vulcan rotated and numerous magic bullets emerged.

The arrow left the bow.

"Kyu! Kya kekiyo kuweek!" shouted Kiao in the goblin language.

At the same time, a tremendous, fearsome storm appeared and descended that completely covered Tiyo. Facing this, Tiyo was just like a candle in front of the wind. The storm overcame him.

".....!"

The practitioners watching the two couldn't help gulping. The gnome would be trampled under the goblin's arrow! However, flashes of light appeared inside the storm.

".....!"

Dududududu!

A thunderous sound! Tiyo's Vulcan began its relentless assault against the storm. The two forces collided.

The power of the spatiotemporal storm! And the colorful magic bullets from Tiyo! The two forces swelled to their limit!

Kwaaaaaang————!

In the end, the arrow storm and General's destructive power collided with each other, causing a big explosion. Kiao and Tiyo flew through the air in the aftermath.

Flop!

Thud!

There was a huge mushroom cloud.

Hwiooooo!

Once the smoke disappeared, the sight of a goblin and gnome lying on the ground was revealed.

“Kuoh... truly strong...”

“You have grown, *kyak...*”

The two exchanged glances while collapsed on the ground. They raised their thumbs towards each other.

They had mocked each other in their first encounter in the Black Forest. Now they acknowledged each other.

CHAPTER 92

NAMERAGON (1)

“Thanks again.”

Crockta extended a fist to Gushantimur and the other creatures. It was the first time the creatures experienced the orc’s greeting and they bumped fists with glee. In particular, the ogre looked at Crockta with passionate eyes as they said farewell.

The cyclops stared with his one eye and said slowly, “Next. You. I. Fight.”

“Kulkulkul. I’m looking forward to it.”

The cyclops had been watching Crockta since he first came. There was no opportunity to compete since he received guidance from Gushantimur all day. The cyclops was bigger than the ogre and was full of hulking muscles! It would be an exciting match.

Tiyo was chatting with the goblin archer as well as the kobold guerilla archer. “Next time we meet, I will turn you into a bee’s nest with Vulcan.”

“*Kyak!* I will drill a hole in your abdomen, a perfect hole *kyak!*”

“I will make you a tomb of arrows!”

It wasn’t a good conversation but he could feel their desire not to say goodbye. Anor also exchanged farewells with the lich. The lich and its skeletons waved their handkerchiefs towards Anor.

Gushantimur was last. The mysterious hermit of the Black Forest. His true identity was a friendly black dragon who helped practitioners break through the walls they encountered.

“Listen to the very end.”

“That’s okay *dot*. I will hear it next time *dot*.”

Gushantimur spoke to Tiyo. Gushantimur knew right away that Tiyo was Hedor’s son.

They had a similar appearance and General had been Hedor's weapon. Gushantimur tried to tell him about Hedor but Tiyo refused.

Now he had the goal to get rid of the crazy chieftain with Crockta. If he found out about his father, his goal might become clouded. After killing the great chieftain, Tiyo would return to this place and listen to Gushantimur's words about his father. It was also a pledge to come back here. Gushantimur respected his opinion.

"But I will ask one thing *dot*." Tiyo's face was determined. "Is my father alive?"

Gushantimur looked quietly at Tiyo and nodded. "He is."

"That is enough. The rest will be told at the next opportunity." Tiyo turned away. Kiao clapped behind him.

Gushantimur's gaze focused on Crockta. "You are going to the Temple of the Fallen God."

"Yes."

"That's right. There..."

Gushantimur was still expressionless, but there was something in his eyes. He seemed to become lost in memories whenever he talked about the Temple of the Fallen God. However, Crockta didn't ask about it.

"When things are done, can we come back here?"

Gushantimur nodded. "Of course. You are my friends."

Crockta felt his chest become hot. Crockta extended his fist and touched it with Gushantimur's fist... Gushantimur met that fist.

"Let's see each other again. Stay alive."

"You too."

It was a farewell. The moment he was going to turn around,

"....."

Then someone spoke. Crockta looked towards the source of the sound. It was his waist.

The demon's skull with steel teeth at his waist, the Demon's Mouth. At the moment, it spoke.

"What did you say?"

He couldn't hear because it was a small sound. Crockta touched the belt. But it didn't say anything else. It looked like a normal steel belt like it had gone back to sleep.

"This guy's situation..."

It was the moment he turned to explain to Gushantimur,

".....!" Gushantimur was watching Crockta with a surprised face.

And...

A flower bloomed. There was a faint smile on his face. The thin corners of his mouth covered in a bright smile for a short time. It was a beautiful expression on Gushantimur that Crockta had never seen before. His eyes were filled with laughter.

"It was like that."

Gushantimur kept the bright smile as he said to Crockta, "I'll be waiting for the day that we meet again."

Crockta didn't ask any more as he nodded with a smile.



They left the Black Forest and headed to Nameragon.

"Crockta, perhaps you've fallen *dot*."

"What do you mean?"

"You looked stunned at Gushantimur's smile *dot*."

"Ah, no. I never..."

“Hihihit, I didn’t know that Crockta’s taste was like that.”

Crockta shook his head.

“What are you talking about? I am a heterosexual person who likes women.”

“Why does that matter *dot*?”

“.....?”

Anor started laughing. “Crockta doesn’t seem to know about dragons.”

“Too ignorant *dot*!”

Crockta frowned and said, “I don’t know what you are talking about.”

Tiyo climbed Crockta’s body and rode him like a horse. He stared at Nameragon in the distance and said, “Dragons have no gender *dot*. Wow, Nameragon is a big city.”

“What?”

Was there no gender, or were they a hermaphrodite?

“Nameragon is big. There are many people *dot*.”

“The thing before that...”

“Ah, a dragon can be a man or a woman whenever necessary. Didn’t you know? The next time you meet, Gushantimur might be a wonderful woman, hihihit.”

“What, is this a scandal? Love between a dragon and orc? Ahh, good. Hahahat!”

Tiyo and Anor laughed at him. Crockta shook his head. It was clear that Anor was taking after the wrong role model.

“We are almost there.”

Crockta ignored them and identified Nameragon in the distance. It was still far away so he couldn’t see it clearly. He used Heart and Soul Penetration. Not only did it have the ability to see through the enemy, but it also improved his eyesight.

Wait. That reminded him, he got a new skill.

[Status Window]

‘One who wants to become a hero’ Crockta, Orc Warrior.

Level: 65

Achievement Points: 545400

Assimilation: 86%

Abilities:

Peerless Mountain Seizing Strength (Pinnacle)

Regeneration Authority (Pinnacle)

Leyteno’s Heart Swordsmanship (Pinnacle)

Extreme Fighting Spirit (Pinnacle)

Heart and Soul Penetration (Pinnacle)

Tattoos of War, Honour and Fighting Spirit (Pinnacle)

Army Crushing Roar of Madness (Pinnacle)

Creatures Butcher (Essence)

Unknown Mysterious Skill Before Use (???)

His new title ‘One who wants to become a hero’ was quite similar to the previous ‘Person Pursuing the Pinnacle.’ His skill experience would be accelerated until he reached the Hero rank. Since Pinnacle rank required more enlightenment than proficiency, it involved Crockta’s proficiency and enlightenment.

His level and achievement points had risen significantly. His ranking would also rise.

Lastly, there was the mysterious skill that he wouldn't know what it was until he used it. It really was a mystery.

Crockta stopped trying to use it. If the skill caused an explosion, there was a chance that Tiyo and Anor might get hurt. Or maybe it was something like a huge blade storm that would sweep around him and create a huge crater. Maybe a meteor would fall from the sky and cause an area of death. Or like a cartoon, his hair would turn blonde and his whole body would power up.

"It is very difficult... Kulkulkul."

That's right. Crockta was filled with great anticipation.

Big expectations might lead to greater disappointment, but Crockta's chest was burning at the thought of the skill. Moreover, it was a skill he got from a dragon. There was no doubt that the skill would match the fury of a dragon.

"Your expression is sneaky Crockta. What are you thinking... perhaps..."

"Nothing." Crockta held out his hand.

"Hmm, it is suspicious."

Tiyo got down from Crockta's neck.

"Anyway, Nameragon is right in front of us! I'm running *dot*! Let's go Anor!"

He started running towards Nameragon. Anor followed with the agile movements of a dark elf. Crockta was left alone. Crockta hesitated as he looked at the status window before using the skill.

"Unknown Mysterious Skill Before Use, activate!"



"Crockta, why are you so slow *dot*?"

"No reason."

Crockta's face was strangely dark as he followed. Tiyo was confused.

"Do you not want to get further away from Gushantimur? Look..."

Crockta picked up a stone and threw it. Tiyo agilely avoided it.

"Hu, huhut! So sensitive *dot!*"

"Don't push him too hard. Doesn't Crockta need time to realize his feelings? Hahahahat."

This guy Anor, he really knew how to trigger a person's anger. After Tiyo, he threw a stone towards Anor. Anor screamed and ran away.

They arrived at the entrance of Nameragon. It was lacking compared to the continent, but the size was similar to Arnin that Crockta visited in the past. The moment they stood in front of the gate, dozens of bows aimed at them from the wall.

".....!"

Crockta grabbed the handle of his greatsword. Tiyo raised General. Anor hid behind Crockta.

"Who are you?" A dark elf on top of the gate said. He was dressed similar to the other dark elves on the wall, but a red cloak was wrapped around him. "Orc, gnome. And a half breed with his ears cut. What a bizarre combination."

Crockta's eyes narrowed. Then he politely said.

"We have come to seek Nameragon's cooperation. I was recognized by the leaders of Orcheim, Dejame, and Altanas in the Luklan Mountains, as well as Nadia of Nuridot. My name is Crockta."

"Ahh. Those guys." The dark elf placed a foot on the railing of the wall. "I heard that a trio was playing as a group of heroes in the north."

It was an obvious taunt. Crockta realized that talking wouldn't change the outcome. He wasn't a person who would bow down in this type of situation.

"It will be difficult if you want to get our permission."

“The conditions?”

“Hrmm... perhaps if you cut the necks of 50 of your kin? Or give me a box of gold. That much is needed for an orc to enter Nameragon.”

“It is too much.”

“It is reasonable, not too much...”

Crockta pulled out his greatsword before the elf finished speaking.

“Don’t misunderstand.”

“Pulling your sword in front of us, are you crazy?”

“Listen up.”

A huge momentum came from Crockta’s body. The gate in front of him was big and thick. It was something that most people wouldn’t even think about breaking through. But he was different.

The world slowed down. It was the world of the Pinnacle that he could freely enter after training with Gushantimur. In the world of the Pinnacle, the gate was just a piece of wood.

Crockta’s vision was different now. “I might not be allowed in here, but I am being polite and understanding.”

Crockta’s greatsword crossed the space. A tremendous amount of power poured from Ogre Slayer. It crossed the space and slammed against the gate.

Kwa kwa kwa kwa!

A large crack was formed on the ground between Crockta and the gate.

“What?” The dark elf yelled with surprise.

The gate collapsed. Beyond the ruined gate, the landscape of Nameragon could be seen. It was moderately developed. The dark elves passing by stared at him in astonishment. Crockta told the dark elves above the gates.

“We can enter Nameragon whenever we want. Please know that.”

“.....!”

“I won’t enter out of consideration for you.”

The dark elves who witnessed Crockta’s action couldn’t say anything. Then the one in charge opened his mouth again.

“You, doing this, you’ve become our enemy...!”

But Crockta just turned around. “Let’s go.”

Crockta turned his back to Nameragon without any fear. Tiyo asked.

“It is okay *dot*? The Temple of the Fallen God is beyond there.”

“It’s okay.”

The dark elves were rushing around behind him, but Crockta didn’t care.

“They will need us in a few days.”

“What are you saying *dot*?”

Crockta recalled what he saw before.

Two days. Two days. Two days. Two days. Two days. Two days. Two days. All of them, two days.

That was their remaining lifespan.

[The Gray God’s Eyes (Outside the Ratings), it is a skill outside the ratings that has the power of a god. Once a day, you can temporarily see the remaining lifespan of those who have entered your field of view.]

CHAPTER 93

NAMERAGON (2)

Crockta's party set up camp near Nameragon.

Tiyo was messing around with General and trying to imagine a new form for his weapon.

Along with the Vulcan form that could fire many bullets at once, Tiyo wanted to develop the same destructive power as the cannon showed by Gushantimur. But it didn't seem to be working out very well.

Tiyo examined General and exclaimed, "It is hard *dot*."

Then he looked at Anor who was playing with bones on the side. Anor had received a few bones from the lich and was advised to diligently handle them in order to use the power of a necromancer in a more sophisticated manner.

He didn't know what animal bones they were, but they came alive once Anor injected his strength. He wondered if they were dog bones as they ran around and rubbed themselves against Anor.

"Can we really go into Nameragon *dot*?"

According to Crockta, Nameragon would need them two days later. The exact meaning was unknown but Crockta didn't explain, so they just waited silently.

"Where is Crockta *dot*?"

"He is going to look around."

Tiyo accidentally stepped on a bone.

"Ah, don't step on my bones!"

"You dark elves are really stiff *dot*. I didn't know Nameragon would react like this."

“That’s right. They are very bad guys, which is why I cut my ears off.”

“.....”

Anor’s ears were healed but traces of the forceful cutting remained. It wasn’t a nice sight to see. He didn’t understand the impact it must’ve had on Anor.

“Which way did Crockta go *dot*?”

“That way. Ah, totally cool. Did you change it again?”

“Huhuhu, this is the sniper edition. Sniper.”

General had grown longer and Tiyo placed it on his shoulder. They were currently on the plains and could see Nameragon. They had decided to stay under a large zelkova tree. There was a forest growing around Nameragon. It was a forest leading from the mountain side where the Black Forest was, but there were no threats like creatures present. Crockta was going to take a look at it.

Tiyo looked for Crockta. He felt Crockta’s presence not long after he entered the forest. The orc’s distinctive large body could easily be seen.

“Crockta! What do you find *dot*?”

“Tiyo.” Crockta was standing in the middle of the forest and looking somewhere.

“Did you find something *dot*?” Tiyo stood next to Crockta and looked in the direction of his gaze.

“They’ll need us in two days so you must know something.”

“Um...”

Crockta frowned.

He was able to identify the lifespan of the elves on the walls of Nameragon using the Gray God’s Eyes. All of them had two days remaining. This meant that most of the dark elf soldiers would die in two days.

The most likely thing was the orcs attacking, just like Nuridot. A skill was used to

secretly infiltrate Nuridot, so it was possible to use the same method to attack Nameragon.

So he looked around to see if he could find enemy scouts near Nameragon. The best place to hide around Nameragon was the forest. It looked like it was flowing down from the mountain. After leaving the forest, it would only be a short walk to Nameragon. It was strange no matter how he thought about it.

Crockta told Tiyo honestly.

Tiyo touched his chin and fell into thought. "Hrmm... The ability to see the remaining lifespan... and furthermore, two days *dot*?"

"I was surprised as well."

"If we wait we'll know." Tiyo nodded. "Can the lifespan change?"

"I don't know yet." Crockta checked the description of the skill but it didn't reveal anything else. It wasn't a common skill as it was outside the ratings. Maybe that was the only way to obtain the skill. "We will find out in a few days."

Tiyo's eyes looked through the scope of General in sniper form.

"But I don't see anyone aiming for Nameragon..."



Two days passed. There weren't any invaders like Crockta expected.

Crockta, Tiyo, and Anor sat around a campfire and eat a light stew while looking at Nameragon.

"Crockta, the day has come *dot*. Are you certain?"

"Um..."

If the system's description was true, it was definitely happening today. At that moment,

Anor cried out as he looked at Nameragon's walls, "Ehhh...?"

“What is it *dot*?”

“I feel something.”

“What do you feel *dot*?”

Anor rose from his spot with a hard expression. “Death.” He was a necromancer who dealt with death. His senses had developed after training with the lich at Gushantimur’s lair. “Something is happening within Nameragon.”

Tiyo devoured his bowl of stew before rising. His hands naturally grabbed General.

“It is coming from inside.”

Crockta also grabbed his greatsword.

“There.”

He saw smoke rising from Nameragon.

“Something seems to be happening.”

Crockta and Tiyo stepped forward first. They approached Nameragon’s gate but didn’t see the soldiers who greeted them before. It was the same when Crockta knocked on the gate. What was happening?

Crockta and Tiyo looked at each other.

“Enter.”

“Good *dot*!”

Crockta pulled out his greatsword. The gate was hastily repaired so it wasn’t as hard to destroy as before.

Crockta felt a little guilty as he swung Ogre Slayer again. His blade tapped the gate. Then the inside of Nameragon was revealed.

“.....!”

Fires were occurring all over the place. Arrows were flying in the distance. Crockta and Tiyo entered. They never imagined Nameragon looking so bleak. Battle noises were coming from everywhere.

The subjects of the fighting were all dark elves. The dark elves of Nameragon had split in two and were fighting each other.

Crockta gulped at the sight.

“An internal schism...”

Then all his questions were answered. Crockta’s party were well-known in the north. They were good news for the dark elves who had to defend against the Great Clan’s attacks after Nuridot. The Luklan Mountains and Nuridot would’ve sent messengers, but the reaction of the dark elves defending the walls was strangely hostile.

There was something wrong.

“There, someone is collapsed *dot!*”

Crockta and Tiyo discovered a dark elf. He was collapsed on the ground and bleeding.

“Hey, are you okay *dot?*”

“Uhh...” He stared at Tiyo with blurry eyes. “Dwarf... it is futile...”

“It isn’t futile and I’m not a dwarf *dot!*”

Tiyo slapped his head.

Then the dark elf’s face became more vivid as his spirit returned.

“You are...?”

“I am Tiyo and this is Crockta. What is happening in Nameragon?” Anor poured a potion on his wound. If the dark elf received treatment then he wouldn’t die.

“Travelers... right now, Nameragon is divided.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Those who want to keep the dark elf’s legacy. And...” The dark elf got up. “The reformists who joined hands with the Great Clan to move forward.”

“What about you?”

“I can’t trust the Great Clan. Holding hands with the crazy chieftain...”

He coughed. Blood flowed out. Anor stabilized him.

“The dark elves who didn’t trust the Great Clan were predominant, but at some point, a person named Aden appeared and started to recruit people. Their numbers grew until this bloodshed began in Nameragon... ’

It was at that moment. An arrow flew towards the dark elf.

Crockta’s hand moved and caught it.

“.....!”

The dark elf gulped as he belatedly noticed that the attack. Crockta glanced in the direction of the attack. There was a group of dark elves holding arrows and knives.

“Who are you?”

Crockta got up. The dark elves became nervous at the sight of the orc’s burly body. It was like a bunch of foxes greeting a tiger. Crockta stepped forward while they retreated.

“A-Are you from the Great Clan? Then we aren’t enemies.”

A dark elf said. Crockta and Tiyo exchanged glances. At that moment, the enemy was identified.

“Not the Great Clan, but those who came to hunt the Great Clan *dot!*”

Tiyo fired General. The elves couldn’t respond to the sudden burst of continuous fire and fell down. Crockta ran and subdued them.

“Maybe we should meet the leader of Nameragon *dot.*”

Crockta agreed. He didn't know who he should wield his sword against.

They brought the collapsed dark elf with them and walked through Nameragon. Arrows were flying here and there. Dead bodies were scattered all over the place.

"Where can I find the leader?"

The dark elf helped by Anor answered Crockta's question. "He will be building a line of defense at City Hall..."

"City Hall?"

"If you go that way..."

They turned the corner and saw a group of dark elves. The dark elves discovered Crockta's party and also raised their weapons.

Crockta also raised his greatsword.

"We have come to help Nameragon. Which side are you on?"

"I came to help Nameragon."

A dark elf came forward. It was a dark elf with scars on his face. Everyone watched his movements like he was the leader.

"An orc with a red headband and a greatsword, yes, you are clearly Crockta."

".....!"

He knew Crockta.

"And the dwarf who is Crockta's..."

"What *dot*?"

Tiyo raised General.

The dark elf continued. "Half breed trash with the ears cut off..."

“I wonder how your face will look once I smash it into the ground, you fucking bastard.

Anor used his unique cursing defense mechanism before the words were over. The dark elf looked stunned for a moment.

“Very vulgar...”

Crockta stepped forward with his greatsword.

“It is bullshit, especially after seeing how relaxed you are. Whatever the case, reveal yourselves first.”

“Huhu, excess self-confidence is like poison.”

He clapped his hands. Then a dark elf walked forward. The dark elf was holding a sword in both hands. His eyes stared blankly at Crockta. There were no emotions in them, like he was a doll.

“Kill the trash that disturbs the north.”

“Yes.”

The dark elf with the double swords came at them. Crockta felt an unknown momentum from him. His movements were light. This guy wasn't trash. He glanced at Tiyo and Anor and already plotted a battle strategy with them.

“I'll go first *dot!*”

Tiyo fired General. General's colorful magic bullets flew towards him.

At that moment, the dark elf with the double swords muttered.

“.....!”

A magic circle floated in the air and absorbed all of Tiyo's attacks. The magic circle shone as it received more energy and revolved around the dark elf. His expression was still calm.

“Magic swordsman?”

A dark elf with long grey hair, wielding double swords and magic. Crockta gulped. This didn't seem easy.

Crockta blinked. In the short moment that he closed his eyes and opened them again...

The dark elf's double swords were already before him.

CHAPTER 94

NAMERAGON (3)

The pair of swords filled Crockta's vision as they flowed through the air like a meteor shower. As Crockta twisted his body to avoid the trajectory of one sword, the other aimed for his neck. The greatsword thwarted the attack. The dark elf's scimitars were blocked by Ogre Slayer. The sound of metal clashing rang out. It was an acrobatic type of defense.

The emotionless dark elf narrowed his eyes.

The world became increasingly slow. In it, Crockta and the dark elf attacked each other at their own pace. It was the world of the Pinnacle.

"Dammit."

Crockta stepped back. It was too quick for the spectators to figure out what had happened. However, Tiyo realized the level of both of them and gripped General more tightly.

"Crockta. He is decent *dot*."

"No."

Crockta grinned as he said, "He is strong."

Since his growth with Gushantimur, he was confident that no one around him would be able to deal with his strength. At least, he believed that he wouldn't struggle until he met the great chieftain.

But he met such an opponent as soon as he reached Nameragon. What was happening?

"What is your name?" asked Crockta.

He greeted the dual wielding swordsman first. The dark elf with the double swords didn't answer. The two blades just moved closer to his tense body.

Instead, the dark elf standing behind him replied, "His name is Driden, a sword genius that won't be born again." He laughed on his own. "Driden only listens to my commands. And as for my name, I am Aden, who will liberate Nameragon and open up a new north..."

Crockta no longer listened. He only cared about the name Driden.

Driden. He was a man worth remembering.

Driden's purple eyes seemed to shine gently. Crockta started laughing. The face was desolate but the eyes were shining like a child.

Crockta's skill had reached the Pinnacle level so Heart and Soul Penetration allowed him to clearly see the world. His vision was clear. His own face could be seen in those purple eyes.

Yes.

Crockta raised his greatsword. In Driden's eyes, Crockta was smiling happily with the same eyes as Driden.

Crockta spoke, "Driden. My name is Crockta."

"....."

"I would love to fight you properly, but it seems like this isn't the right time."

Crockta swung his greatsword as he finished speaking. A black wave emerged along Ogre Slayer's trajectory. It headed towards the dark elves who were blocking this place.

".....!"

Driden quickly muttered under his breath and a magic circle reappeared in the air. A magic shield unfolded around Driden, but the ones outside it couldn't block Crockta's attack. The ferocious energy slashed at the bodies of the dark elves and a fountain of blood appeared on the outskirts of Aden's group.

"What?"

Aden freaked out.

“Run!” Crockta carried the injured dark elf and immediately fled. Tiyo and Anor swiftly followed. The opponents didn’t chase them.



They ran through Nameragon. They turned the corner several times. He didn’t see a single person in the square where people originally gathered.

Sometimes dark elves would look at them through cracks in the window.

Crockta asked the injured dark elf, “What is your position?”

Right now, all of the civilians were hiding like mice. The fact that he was caught in this fight meant he was a soldier mobilized for the city’s defense, or he had some type of relationship with Nameragon’s leader.

“I...”

The dark elf gazed at Crockta. He looked at Tiyo and Anor in turn before opening his mouth.

“I am Adinio, the brother of Radet, who is the leader of Nameragon. I work as an administrator of Nameragon.”

Crockta nodded. “So they were looking for you?”

“They wanted to use me as a hostage to intimidate my brother. Aden is hurrying to catch my brother. Before ‘he’ comes back.”

“He?”

“No matter how much Nameragon is lacking in battle resources, it was easy for Aden to strike because ‘he’ was away.” Adinio’s eyes shone. “The great magician, Jamero.”

“Jamero?”

“He departed for Spinoa for a while. He is the one who has the most power in Nameragon. If he were here, then Aden would’ve never done this.”

Matters in Nameragon seemed complex.

Crock realized it once again. Ever since he started Elder Lord, he learned that there were no simple incidents. Desire and greed were entangled together, eventually leading to tragedy. This truly resembled reality.

In the first place, was a skill to read someone's lifespan even possible? The skill that the system presented him with, Gray God's Eyes.

Crockta remembered the face of someone who spoke to him with sad eyes. It was Gordon who wielded tremendous power with his sword. He spoke about the Temple of the Fallen God. Everything was clearly connected.

He had to go there to find the answers. In order to do that, he needed to save this place.

"What are you going to do?" asked Crockta.

At present, Crockta didn't know about the internal circumstances of Nameragon. Adinio would be able to think of a better plan as the administrator. Crockta, Tiyo, and Anor watched him.

Adinio pondered for awhile before opening his mouth, "Right now, they are trying to seize the City Hall. In particular, the skills of that person called Driden is too great..."

"I agree."

Crockta nodded.

The dual wielding swordsman, Driden's abilities alone were enough to overwhelm the battlefield. The pair of swords battered the target like a storm while attacks could be blocked with magic. Common soldiers would fall down like autumn leaves.

"Let's go to City Hall and join my brother."

"How?"

"There is a secret passage."

"A secret passage? Then, what if your brother escaped through the passage?"

“No. Brother would never leave.” Adinio spoke firmly. “City Hall can’t be passed over to Aden.”

All the information was contained in City Hall. There was top secret information about Nameragon that Aden couldn’t be allowed to obtain. It could endanger the entire dark elf alliance, including Nameragon and Spinoa.

“He is such a person.”

“Um.”

Crockta nodded. It would be better to meet up with the person called Radet. Adinio took the lead. They turned back to the outskirts of the city. They occasionally met dark elves who sympathized with Aden but Tiyo and Crockta easily subdued them.

The group’s weapons were taken away and they were tied up before heading out towards the secret passage again. Adinio stopped when he reached an inn. There was an inn in Nameragon that didn’t exist in Nuridot. The size of the city was large so there was an inn.

Adinio checked that there was no one around and quietly opened the door. The interior was quiet. The pub on the first floor that wouldn’t normally be noisy was completely empty. Crockta, Tiyo, and Anor followed Adinio inside. Anor carefully closed the entrance. The door was blocked and the sunlight entering cut off. Darkness filled the interior of the inn.

Adinio whispered, “Reina.”

No one answered.

“Reina?”

His voice rang through the inn.

Step. Step.

There was the sound of footsteps on the stairs connected to the above floor. They were light and nimble footsteps.

“Adinio?”

A female dark elf appeared with a bow on her back and a sword in her hand. She seemed to be checked the internal boundaries and lowered her sword once she saw Adinio.

“What is happening? Looking like that... and those people.”

“Thank god you’re safe.”

Adinio drew her into a hug. She relaxed and they exchanged greetings. Adinio introduced Crockta’s group.

“They are the ones who helped me.”

“Perhaps, Crockta?”

“How did you know?”

“I heard the rumors. I’ve heard about you a few times from Radet. Are you really Crockta?”

Crockta nodded. She sighed with relief.

“How fortunate. It is nice to meet you. I’ve heard rumors that you are incredibly strong. Come in.”

Tiyo coughed to announce his presence. His eyes expected a saga about him. But she broke Tiyo’s expectations.

“The followers are here as well.”

“.....!”

‘F-Follower...!’ Tiyo muttered with a devastated face. Crockta tapped on Tiyo’s shoulder with an expression of victory.

“Did anyone come from the passage?”

“No, not yet.”

They headed to the basement of the inn. It was an old warehouse. There was a small

door covered in a cloth behind a pile of junk. Reina shook off the dust.

“Radet is safe, right?”

“I’m sure he is safe.”

“Yes... Please, Adinio.”

“Of course.” Adinio turned and looked at Crockta, Tiyo, and Anor. “This is a late thank you. Thank you for helping Nameragon despite having no relation to us.”

“You’re welcome.”

“Will you come help us once again?”

“Of course.”

“Thank you. I will surely repay you.” Adinio bowed his head. Then he exchanged glances with Reina.

“Be careful.”

“You too.”

The door to the secret passage was opened. A large tunnel appeared. Adinio took a light and entered the tunnel first. Crockta, Tiyo, and Anor followed. Adinio’s light lit up the tunnel. The opening was narrow but it soon became a wide passage. It was so well made that it wouldn’t collapse easily.

Sometimes when they walked, they could hear footsteps and vibrations above their heads. Perhaps a battle was occurring on top. Adinio’s pace increased. The light cast shadows at his gestures.

“Go quickly.”

Crockta also started running. They ran around a few turns. Then at the end, a narrow space like the beginning appeared. An iron door was beyond it. Adinio crawled through the narrow tunnel and grabbed the iron door. It was old so it wouldn’t open. Rust fell from it.

“I’ll try it.”

Crockta went forward. The two of them exchanged positions. Adinio was barely able to retreat behind Crockta.

Crockta grabbed the doorknob. His muscles swelled as he pulled open the door.

Kiiiiik!

The iron door started to slowly open. Crockta fell back as the door suddenly opened.

“Ouch...”

Adinio trembled after being hit by Crockta. Crockta apologized.

“I’m sorry.”

“It’s okay. Once inside...”

The iron door revealed another warehouse inside City Hall. There were many dusty tools piled up. Crockta, Adinio, Tiyo, and Anor exited the tunnel. The inside of City Hall was quiet. Adinio led the way. They climbed the stairs of the warehouse, revealing a clean internal structure. City Hall was located in the north part of the city.

“Brother would’ve blocked the entrance to City Hall. I’ll go up first.”

“I understand.”

Adinio climbed the stairs. Loud noises started to gradually be heard. They were able to meet a dark elf inside City Hall.

“Who?”

As Adinio and Crockta reached the final steps, arrows and knives were aimed at them.

“.....!”

It was a familiar face.

“You...”

“I ended up seeing you again.” Crockta grinned. The ‘2 days’ was still floating above his head. “I told you. We can come in at any time. “

It was Nameragon’s defense captain who stopped Crockta from entering the gate. His face distorted before turning towards Adinio and saying, “Adinio! You led them here?”

“Yes.”

“What are you...?”

“They came to help us. What are you talking about?” Adinio frowned. He was in a bad mood. “If you are still willing to emphasize the dark elves’ pure blood in this situation, then shut up. Ironically, it is the pure blood dark elves attacking us now.”

“.....!”

The captain’s face flushed.

Adinio sighed and said, “Now isn’t the time to fight. Where is my brother?”

“He is in the office.”

As they were talking, the dark elf soldiers were firing arrows through the windows. It was to contain Aden’s group who were looking for a way to enter the blocked City Hall.

“They will soon enter. In particular, the dark elf using double swords is strong. Crockta is required.”

Adinio said soothingly. The guard’s face calmed and he nodded.

“I know.”

“I will go to see my brother. Crockta. Let’s go together.”

He followed Adinio and they arrived at the office of Radet, leader of Nameragon.

The door opened. The sight inside the office was completely different from what Crockta expected.

CHAPTER 95

NAMERAGON (4)

In the office, a dark elf was huddled on the floor and shivering. It was a miserable appearance.

“Brother...” Adinio muttered.

The leader of Nameragon, Adinio’s brother, discovered them. “Oh, you came, Little Brother,” said Radet in a lively voice before kicking the shivering dark elf.

“Cough...!”

The huddled up dark elf rolled around on the floor. Radet, a dark elf with a sturdy body, was beating a dark elf in his office. Radet looked around for something before wrapping a leather belt around his hand. Then he hit the dark elf. The dark elf begged for mercy.

However, Radet was decisive. “Now tell me. Why did Aden become like this?”

“Nothing... don’t know...”

“Not yet.” Radet placed his foot on the head and spat. The saliva mixed in with the tears flowing down the dark elf’s cheek.

“Little Brother, this guy is a traitor.”

“Brother.”

“That bastard has been provoked by the fact that Jamero isn’t here. Hahahat. Bastard.” Radet swung the belt fiercely. Blood splattered. The dark elf’s scream rang through the office. “This guy, he gave them most of the information about the garrison!”

Radet trampled on the dark elf before tilting his head.

“By the way, who is your friend over there?”

“Crockta came to help us.”

“Ohh, Crockta!” He dropped the belt and opened his arms. “Crockta, the orc who repelled the Great Clan in the Luklan Mountains and Nuridot! Really! It is a pleasure!”

“I am alive.”

Radet approached Crockta and hugged him. He laughed and hit Crockta’s back.

“I heard the rumors, but now you are in my office!”

Crockta wondered if this man was an orc inside a dark elf’s skin. His body and actions made him seem like a soldier of Orcrox.

“I am ashamed to meet you in a situation like this.”

Radet beckoned for them to sit. He grabbed the dark elf lying on the floor and threw him into a corner. The dark elf groaned against the wall.

“Leave him alone.”

“He will die.”

“Numerous garrison soldiers and civilians have died because of him. It is cheaper for him to die.”

Radet was decisive. Crockta’s group sat down on chairs in the office.

“How is it outside?”

“Aden has already taken control of the crowd.”

“Shit. If only Jamero was here.”

“When will he come back?”

“It will be 10 more days. If I contact him then he might come sooner.” Radet bowed his head and touched his chin. “This isn’t good. Especially that Driden guy...”

He glanced at the sword on his desk. It was larger than the rapiers normally used by

the dark elves and smaller than Crockta's greatsword. It was a bastard sword. He shook his head.

"No. It is hard for me." He judged the situation calmly, unlike his urgent personality.

"Brother, it might be possible if it is Crockta," said Adinio.

He had already seen Driden and Crockta face each other. It was only a moment, but Crockta wasn't pushed by him. Rather, he dealt a blow to Aden's group and escaped. Given the right circumstances, he believed that Crockta would win.

"I see."

Radet had an uneasy but positive expression on his face.

"However, it isn't just a simple matter of winning the battle."

"What do you mean?"

"Aden suddenly gained influence. Citizens started agreeing with him. They believe in the absurd bullshit of cooperating with the Great Clan! They also grabbed their weapons."

Radet looked at the dark elf in the corner. The dark elf was sitting down and avoided his gaze.

"It is the same for this guy as well. He isn't stupid, so it is strange that he joined Aden."

"Then there is something behind it."

"Yes. In fact, even Aden seems affected. He is hot-tempered but he doesn't have the guts to act crazy like this."

Radet was silent for a moment before speaking like it was a secret. "The Great Clan."

"What about the Great Clan?"

"The great chieftain has a mysterious shaman beside him." His gaze was calm. Radet was a man who could be as cold as ice when necessary. "The shaman has an unknown power. In particular, people are acting strangely according to his will. There is a rumor

that the great chieftain suddenly went crazy because of him.”

“Then...”

“It is just my opinion.” Radet turned his eyes to Adinio, Crockta, Tiyo and Anor. “The war with the Great Clan wouldn’t be a simple story where victory is achieved if you beat them. There are clearly strange things.”

Crockta’s eyes sank at the words. He had a point.

The gnomes were longtime neighbors in the Luklan Mountains yet they suddenly attacked. In Nuridot, orcs had infiltrated to obtain hostages. Now an agitator called Aden appeared and divided Nameragon from the inside.

It was different from the usual way that orcs fought. It was possible if there was the power of an evil shaman.

“I can’t let it go according to his will.”

Radet got up from his seat.

“Check the defenses again. City Hall has a magic circle installed for emergencies. We will be able to hold on until Jamero comes.”

He tied up the beaten dark elf and walked out of the office.



The garrison soldiers, including the captain, were firing arrows out the window. Aden’s group continued to hover around City Hall.

“They won’t come in easily. If they become more violent, the citizens won’t tolerate it anymore. It is advantageous for us who are trying to buy time.”

Radet murmured as he looked outside. Crockta extended his head. He saw Aden and Driden. Suddenly, Driden raised his head.

He looked at Radet’s window then glanced over the garrison members firing the arrows. Crockta stepped back to avoid revealing the existence of the secret passage.

Driden started walking forward. The dark elves were nervous. It wasn't anyone else, but the demonic swordsman Driden. It was a slow pace, like he was just walking. A few arrows flashed towards him but they were all deflected by Driden's scimitars. It was an amazing sight.

"What should we do?"

The guards shouted. Radet maintained his composure.

"It's okay. This place is guarded by magic.

Even if he approached the first floor, he wouldn't be able to enter and would be thrown back by the magic. Radet believed that. It was a magic circle carefully made by Jamero. Enemies could never destroy it unless they were strong magicians.

Indeed, Driden trembled for a moment and stepped back. Every time he tried to enter City Hall, electricity would shoot out and block outsiders.

"He can never come in..."

The moment that Radet was speaking. A shaking was felt inside City Hall.

".....!"

Driden wielded his sword.

At the same time, his scimitars shone purple. Then a magic circle that was the same color revolved around him. It was the same as the magic to block attacks. The two magic powers collided with each other and caused a shock wave. It was this unseen force that shook City Hall.

"That isn't a magic swordsman," Tiyo said. "That magic sword *dot....* it is very powerful."

There was a strange twist of magic power every time Driden hit the barrier. That feeling was never calm. The magic circle around City Hall was gradually getting cracked.

"Radet!" A garrison member ran up the stairs. "The crystal core... it is cracked."

“.....!”

The magic circle couldn't be operated alone. If a magician wasn't present, they needed something that contained the corresponding magic power. Whenever Jamero wasn't present, the source was a crystal that contained his magic power.

“Dammit.” Radet swallowed down his nausea and laughed. “What to do? I guess we have to fight.”

The garrison members continued to fire arrows but the situation didn't look good.

Radet brought the bastard sword from his office. Crockta had never seen a dark elf hold a heavy weapon but Radet's muscles were good.

“Crockta, are you going to fight?”

“Of course.”

“Thank you. I will never forget your help.” Radet said, “I know that our dark elves are sometimes hostile to other species. If you catch that Aden, at least Nameragon won't stop you from your goal.

Crockta grinned. “Don't worry. Not long after Nameragon, the whole north will fear me.”

Crockta held Ogre Slayer. “I won't catch just Aden, but the great chieftain as well.”

“Indeed!” Radet burst out laughing. “I was thinking too small. Hahat! Let's go, guys!”

Radet had the power to encourage people. His cavalier attitude gave them the belief that they could survive the life-threatening situation with him. The garrison equipped themselves. Some archers remained at the windows on the upper floor, while the rest went down the stairs to meet Driden.

“Tiyo. What is that magic sword?”

Crockta had never met a warrior who used a magic sword.

“Think of it like my General *dot*. He uses magic while wielding the sword. It is dangerous since you don't know what is going to happen. That sword is probably

focused more on defense magic.”

“Defense magic.”

Speaking of which, Crockta was vulnerable to non-physical attacks like magic from magicians and shamans. He could avoid it after reaching Pinnacle, but he would struggle if he met a senior mage of the same level. If he had a magic artifact like Driden, he would be able to defend against magic.

‘It doesn’t suit me.’

Crockta imagined himself wielding the slender scimitars.

“Um...”

The appearance really wasn’t good.

The party arrived on the first floor while Crockta was thinking about this. Driden was breaking the defense magic at the entrance of City Hall. The drops of sweat on Driden’s forehead showed that it wasn’t easy. Every time he wielded the sword, he had to use the magic circle so his body was weary.

“What are you doing? Go quickly! Stupid guy!” Aden’s voice was heard, “Do it faster, you idiot!”

Crockta’s eyes narrowed. It wasn’t a respectful attitude. The face of Aden, saying that Driden only listened to his commands, vividly appeared in his head. He didn’t like it.

Crockta stepped forward. Radet and the garrison members turned towards him. Tiyo and Anor were familiar with Crockta so they already knew what he was going to do. Tiyo grabbed General while Anor held a small wand gifted to him by the lich in the Black Forest.

Crockta stood at the entrance. He met Driden’s eyes. Crockta opened the door.

“.....!”

The door was opened from inside so the magic circle faded. Crockta spoke, “We meet again, Driden.”

“.....”

He still didn't say anything. However, his eyes were shining like he was glad. It looked like he still wanted to swing his swords, as he alternated between Crockta's face and the greatsword.

“Wait a minute. There is no urgency.”

“.....”

His double swords twitched in the air. He looked like he wanted to stab Crockta right now.

Aden approached behind Driden. There were a lot of people. It was more than double Radet and the garrison members. Besides, they were holding garrison members already captured as hostages.

They had been able to identify the garrison members thanks to the whistleblower and struck before the soldiers arrived for their shift. The guards on duty were also attached on the way to City Hall.

Aden laughed and said, “Remember, Radet. The foolish days when you wandered as an elf on the battlefields.”

“I remember. Now I am the mayor of Nameragon while you are still wandering about.”

“Shut up.”

Aden's face was flushed. However, his face returned to normal in a few minutes. Then he spoke like he was acting in a play, “Oh, God help me. The old grudge is returning and grabbing at my neck. The cold fire that hasn't changed as years passed, just accumulated like dry and unbearable soot!”

“Are you still writing drama pieces?”

“You will know what's coming. It is time that you are removed as mayor of Nameragon.”

Aden pushed Driden's back. He took a step forward. Radet looked at Driden. He examined the face closely and an old memory popped up.

“You, perhaps...”

“Yes.” Aden said, “This is Driden, the son of Hurio, whom you killed.”

Driden raised the pair of swords. Aden pointed to Radet and said, “Now, Driden. Kill your father’s enemy. My soldier, my sword, wipe out the tumor of Nameragon...!”

The moment that Aden shouted,

Chaeng!

Something flew.

Rattle!

“Ack...”

Blood was scattered.

A small dagger had flown towards Aden and Driden struck at it. However, the power was so enormous that Driden couldn’t reflect it completely. Instead, it was pushed into the shoulder of the elf standing next to Aden.

They looked at the epicenter of the dagger.

“You are too talkative.” It was Crockta. “Listen.”

Crockta raised his greatsword. A fearsome momentum gushed from him, causing all the dark elves except for Driden to step back. Driden just smiled happily and prepared his double swords.

Everyone sensed it. They didn’t need to say anything.

At this moment. The fight between monsters that they couldn’t interfere in began.

CHAPTER 96

MONSTERS (1)

‘Keep this in mind, Driden.’

‘Orcs are strong and persistently struggle if the attack doesn’t kill them. Make sure you cut their heads off.’

He recalled that voice. He was led by two things: the voice and his instincts. As long as he followed those two things, the enemies would eventually beg him for mercy.

Sometimes he killed his enemies and other times he kept them alive. Then he looked for the next opponent. It was his routine. So why?

“.....!”

Kakakaang!

The double swords were thrown back at the same time.

It was a crazy power.

Driden pulled up his double swords again and started moving. All of his strikes were on the offensive, his double swords looking like they were dancing. He followed the rhythm and moved between the enemy’s gaps in their defense. The core of the enemy was revealed.

Then...

Kakakaang!

They bounced off again.

This orc was different. His tempo was constantly shifting.

Driden’s face stiffened. The orc facing him was holding a massive greatsword.

“Kuk!”

Nevertheless, he was incredibly fast. The gigantic greatsword moved from east to west, west to east. Its trajectory was unpredictable. He had barely broken through City Hall's magic, but now he was being pushed out of City Hall by the orc.

"I can't smash the building." The orc grinned.

Driden also forced a laugh. He pretended to smile, but his insides were boiling.

No fun. Fighting was dull.

He squeezed the double swords in his hands. The greatsword was big and heavy. Therefore, Driden dug inwards.

"Hat!"

His double swords shook like flowers. Driden expected the attack to tear the enemy's body apart; however, the greatsword was right in front of his nose instead. The tremendous pressure pushed his body down towards the ground. He stopped all attacks and rolled across the ground. He was barely able to avoid the enemy's blade.

He rose from his spot, breathing hard.

"....."

The surroundings were still. Indeed, it wasn't fun. Fighting was a two-way street. Each attack must stir the other person. However, his attack had no effect on the orc. Rather, he was constantly defending against the orc's strikes.

He clenched his double swords again.

"Crazy bastards..."

Someone's voice broke the silence. The people around them couldn't figure out what was happening right now.

Driden shook his head and got back into position. The orc could also enter the 'zone' like him. No, he accelerated the construction of it more freely than Driden.

Not fun, just another unlucky bastard.

“What is it?” asked the orc.

Driden stared at the heinous face before him. The orc’s eyes shone even more fiercely.

“Smile.”

Then the orc’s figure disappeared.

“.....!”

He lost the enemy. Then the greatsword appeared in front of his nose. It was an explosive acceleration that seemed to leap across space. This couldn’t be avoided. Alarms rang through his whole body.

He instinctively activated the magic of his scimitars. The defense was unfolded.

Kaaaang!

A magic circle appeared between him and the greatsword.

“Hoh.” The orc’s eyes widened. However, cracks started forming and the magic circle shattered in a few moments. The orc got rid of the remnants of magic power.

“How many times can you use this?”

Driden stepped back and took deep breaths. His double swords shook. He needed to find his own rhythm. He had to maintain his flow and shake the enemy’s flow. It was the only way to win the fight.

‘Orcs are simple.’

‘They are all about pushing with force.’

‘Trust your techniques.’

Once again, he heard the voice of his father.

He had all types of tricks to use with the double swords. He kept his left shoulder down and struck with the right. One trick would lead to being able to hit the enemy two then three or four times. He confused the enemy and then used attacks that couldn’t be

disrupted.

He could do it. He was a genius. When he fought seriously, no one could catch up with him. He believed it. However, the orc wasn't fooled by his tricks. It felt like all his thoughts were being read.

A blade split the air and hit his shoulder.

"Kuk!"

The scimitars cried out and the magic was triggered. If it wasn't for the magic swords, he would've died once again. It was two times. He borrowed the power of the magic swords to save his life twice.

"What are you doing, you idiot! Fight properly! Just chop apart that slow orc!"

Aden's voice was heard. Driden was annoyed. Aden couldn't follow the movements with his eyes yet he called the orc slow. But it was true that he needed to fight properly.

Driden grit his teeth and tightened his grip on his scimitars.

He moved forward again.

The greatsword's huge size was an annoying obstacle. The orc used the greatsword with bizarre reflexes. If he tried to stab through the gaps, the attack would be black with the blade, the handle and sometimes the steel belt at the orc's waist.

Therefore, he needed to speed up. Driden focused his mind.

He stomped his feet. One time, two times, three times faster. Gradually, his body accelerated beyond realistic limits.

He was a bird gliding over the orc with wings spread. The bird's speed gradually slowed.

Cut in half. He was cut in half. Cut in half again.

The flight in the sky faltered. The speed converged infinitely with his spirit.

Stop. It was a world that never stopped moving.

In it, Driden moved alone. The enemies observing the fight, including Radet, were gone.

Unmatched step. His identity was someone who would cut the neck of the enemy before they even knew they died. That was assassination. The pair of swords flashed towards Crockta's neck.

He saw Crockta's eyes staring into the distance. At that moment,

Suruk.

Crockta's eyes moved. He laughed at Driden. Driden got goosebumps.

At the same time, something unknown happened. In the still world, Crockta's greatsword started to move. It met the double swords. The two exchanged blows again. Both of them sped up in the world of acceleration. Driden breathed roughly and blocked it.

There was a slight smile on Driden's hardened face. He would die if he made the slightest mistake. The greatsword hacked at his clothing several times and he repeatedly came close to death.

There was a sense of uplifting. Adrenaline filled his body like a drug.

"Yes, yes."

The orc came one step closer to him. Driden stepped forward. Like a giant, he poured out his courage towards the orc who had a terrifying presence. Courage was never his thing, but it seemed like he would need it today.

The orc smiled. Driden also grinned. Their weapons moved slowly.

The two of them collided once again.



Radet was able to witness their fight. It was an honor.

"What is going on right now?" asked the garrison leader.

However, Radet couldn't properly explain it.

"Crockta seemed a little superior at first, but they have become similar again." That was all he could say.

He couldn't add any commentary. A fight between heaven and earth! The surrounding buildings were broken in the aftermath. They cut and chopped at each other in the streets. That was all.

However, their movements were so fast and elaborate that it was hard to follow with the eyes. They were acrobatics that expressed the world of the Pinnacle. It was a close battle where one mistake would lead to their lives being lost.

They were dancing at the boundary of life and death.

"Monsters."

He could only say that.

Crockta used the greatsword like it was another limb and Driden who showed extreme dual swordsmanship, they were both monsters that transcended the Pinnacle. It was a fight of monsters that could destroy armies alone.

Even the dark elves not versed in fighting could feel it. Thus, nobody opened their mouths and just watched the two fight blankly. It even managed to keep Aden silent.

The fight between the two continued. Radet inwardly hoped that it would last forever. Then he realized something after having that thought.

He smiled. He was once a warrior who swept the battlefield with his bastard sword. Therefore, he could see even more how fascinating their fight was.

Some time passed. Their fighting made even the sense of time dull.

Radet spoke first, "Aden."

Aden raised his head and responded, "What?"

"Did you have to do this?"

“Shut up. Borrowing the strength of a wandering orc, how far has Radet fallen?”

“You are the crazy one who is using Hurio’s son.”

As Crockta and Driden exchanged blows, Radet and Aden continued their conversation.

“The son of the one you killed returned for revenge! It is a sharp grudge that can only be cut off with the sword.”

“You must remember what type of person Hurio was.”

“That doesn’t matter.”

Aden raised his hands. He pointed at the dark elves holding rapiers and bows behind him.

“The general trend doesn’t change. I will obtain Nameragon, join forces with the Great Clan to unify the north and make the continent the land of the dark elves.”

Aden’s eyes were blazing as he spoke. It was the expression of a spellbound fanatic. Radet was unable to convince him with words.

He looked at the bastard sword. At one time, he was also a warrior. The warrior who killed Hurio. But he couldn’t overcome these numbers.

“You seem to have forgotten about us *dot*.”

At that moment. A noise was heard from behind him. It was Tiyo. He aimed General at Aden’s group. At the same time, the silent Anor opened his power. Dark energy started to spread along the ground.

“.....!”

Radet grinned and Aden’s face distorted. Aden lowered his hands.

“Attack!”

From that point on, the dark elves started their protest.

Arrows flew in a straight line. They fired indiscriminately without worrying about Crockta and Driden. Arrows flew towards Crockta and Driden, with the rest flooding towards Radet and the garrison soldiers.

The first one affected was Driden as an arrow aimed at him from behind. He turned his body like a spin-top and struck the arrow with his double swords. Crockta didn't miss the gap that was revealed. As Driden was defending, Crockta's greatsword descended towards Driden.

Driden crossed his double swords and blocked the strike. But his posture was unstable and he staggered. The greatsword neared him again. Driden gritted his teeth. He sloppily moved to the side and evaded the greatsword. Crockta pursued him. Crockta was on the offensive while Driden was on the defensive. The tide was gradually shifting towards Crockta.

Aden saw this and ordered his men to fire again. The dark elves started to prepare their arrows. At that moment,

Clink.

Crunch. Clink.

Aden lifted his head at the sound. It was the strange gnome standing with Radet. The artifact in his hand was curiously changing. The muzzle multiplied by two and then four, and the barrel expanded. It slowly started to spin.

".....?"

Aden started blankly at the muzzles. Tiyo cried out as Vulcan rotated in earnest, "Kiyoooooh!"

After lowering his body towards the ground, Tiyo fired Vulcan. He withstood the recoil and sprayed his magic bullets to the left and right.

"Crockta! Take care of yourself *dot!*"

"No problem!"

Crockta jumped from the ground. Tiyo's bullets hit the ground where Crockta had jumped up. Driden had no information about Tiyo's magic bullets so he tried to stop

them with his sword, only to become embroiled in the aftermath. General damaged Driden's body with magic power.

A few seconds of indiscriminate shooting! The short attack led to the enemies being incapacitated for a moment. Tiyo gasped from the energy consumption and stepped back.

Then Radet and the garrison moved forward. It was a melee but Radet and his garrison were already in control. Aden, who was holding a weapon for the first time in his life, surrendered the moment the weapon's shadow fell on his head.

Once Crockta overtook Driden, Aden gave up and surrendered to Radet. It was a splendid ending.

Tiyo puffed out his chest and proudly exclaimed, "Huhuhu, Crockta did you see *dot*?"

"You have a strange expression."

"Are you jealous *dot*? You fought hard but I was the one who decided our victory!"

Tiyo started running. "Me!"

He jumped back and forth with his hands above his head. Tiyo struck a pose filled with 100% testosterone and self-pride!

"Tiyo!"

CHAPTER 97

MONSTERS (2)

Aden's conspiracy was stopped by Tiyo's actions.

The garrison leader announced that the situation was over. Vigor started to return to Nameragon and citizens reappeared on the deserted streets and in the plaza. Their response was surprisingly lackadaisical.

"What? I told you that Radet was going to fix it."

"Radet is mayor, so how could Aden overthrow him?"

"The garrison suffered, truly suffered."

Nameragon started to return to its ordinary routine.

It would've been a dangerous situation without Crockta's group, but the citizens firmly believed in Radet. It was clear how much faith he normally gave. Radet went around Nameragon to thank the citizens and stabilize the public.

"Citizens! Thank you! Thanks to your calm actions, we were able to finish the situation quickly. Hahahat!"

"Hey, thank you, Mayor."

"No. No. This isn't my work. Hahat! Aden was a little bit hard!"

Occasionally, there were people who became nervous about Crockta's group. "Mayor. Who is that orc and that gnome? The situation is chaotic and..."

"Ahh, they are my friends. They helped a lot."

"If you say so, Mayor."

Radet toured the city once before returning to City Hall. He had yet to decide what to do with Driden and Aden, who were tied up.

Radet sighed, "Let's hold off until Jamero returns."

He ignored Aden's poisonous glance and struck his back. "If you were caught in some magic, I have to consider that."

He believed that there was a shaman who was assisting the great chieftain. Aden didn't deny it. He didn't think he would fall for such a trick, but he wasn't going to throw away the chance of cutting down his punishment after being defeated. He certainly was an opportunist.

Radet's gaze turned towards Driden.

"Driden."

Radet called his name. Driden shook his head no emotion on his face. However a raging fire could be seen within his eyes.

"The son of Hurio." Driden nodded in response.

Radet recalled the past.

Hurio used a pair of swords, just like Driden. His nickname was sword demon. He swung his swords like two demons were attached to his arms. And Radet killed him.

"I definitely killed him."

Driden's hands twitched. He was instinctively looking for his swords. However, there was nothing he could wield.

"But I don't regret it. Do you know what your father was like?"

"....."

"He was a madman who killed everyone around him."

That's right. Hurio wasn't in a normal state. He was a swordsman who traveled around the north on an adventure, but suffered critical injuries in a fight one day. The wounds could be treated, but the pain and fallout from it caused him to become paranoid, eventually turning him into a madman.

“Do you know?”

Driden dropped his head. He spat on the ground and looked back up, this time with no emotion in his eyes. “So?”

“I did what I had to do.”

“It doesn’t matter.” Driden looked at Radet’s neck. If he managed to get his hands on anything around him, he would slice away at Radet’s face. He would perform the given task without any emotions, like a butcher mechanically cutting up meat.

“I was also doing my job.” Driden responded and Radet realized something.

Driden was a sword. He was a sword that was smelted by Hurio and then wielded by Aden in order to achieve a goal. He was an incomplete weapon that could only orbit the enemy, unable to turn or stop on his own.

He only looked at his task: To kill the enemy.

“Put everyone in jail.”

“Yes.”

The garrison soldiers dragged them out one by one. They would be detained in jail. He would wait for Jamero’s advice before making the final decision.

Radet returned to his office. He sat on the chair.

“Hoo.”

Countless documents were on the wide table. This was the battlefield he was facing right now. There were a number of public works waiting for his signature, from minor administration to cooperation with Spinoa and countermeasures against the Great Clan.

Now his body was like Nameragon, so the enemy’s sword was also heading towards his body. Compared to this, it was much simpler when he traveled around the world with a sword.

He recalled the three visitors. The orc warrior Crockta, the gnome soldier Tiyo and the

half elf from Nuridot, Anor. Radet was once like that. He felt envious.

“No.”

He laughed and shook his head. He didn't want to return to the past. The memories he recalled with an ambiguous smile, they weren't always good. Radet's eyes always looked at the reality he faced.

In the past, his enemies were people who wielded the sword right in front of his eyes. But now his enemy was the north. The dark elves would find it hard to overcome the waves of hardship that the great chieftain would create. Therefore, he needed to be more firm.

This weapon should be something other than a sword.

Knock knock knock.

Someone knocked on the door of the office. Radet grinned and said, “Come in.”

It was Crockta, Tiyo, and Anor. Radet pointed to the chairs opposite the desk and welcomed, “Please relax.”

Crockta didn't sit down. “I need your permission to enter the Temple of the Fallen God.”

“Correct.”

“Please allow it.”

“Um...” Radet smiled. It wasn't easy for him to negotiate. “Not just anyone can enter the Temple of the Fallen God...”

Tiyo puffed up as he proudly proclaimed, “We aren't just anyone! We are benefactors who saved Nameragon *dot!*”

“That's correct but...”

Crockta saw Radet's mock hesitation and said, “Radet, stop pretending and tell us what you want.”

Radet nodded. "Crockta, you noticed quickly."

"What else do you want from us *dot*? You are really shameless."

"I'm sorry but I'm not a single body." Radet shrugged and knocked on the table. The papers were piled up. He meant that Nameragon was his share as well. "If you go to Nameragon's jail, Driden will be trapped."

"Um."

"Please bring him around."

Tiyo frowned. "No, why do we need to bring that guy around? You do it *dot*?"

"I can't do it, but it might be possible for you. Especially if it is Crockta." Radet gazed at Crockta. "During your fight, did you see Driden's face? He is that type of guy. A man stronger than him has to show him the way. Right now, he has lost his way and is only caught up in revenge for his father."

Radet rose from his seat and approached Crockta. He then handed over a piece of paper. Crockta's eyes narrowed as he read it.

"That stupid guy, tell him his fate."



Crockta headed towards Nameragon's garrison. There was a detention room in the basement. The defense leader guided Crockta. Driden was staring into the darkness with both arms tied in a corner of the detention room.

"Open the door," commanded Crockta. The garrison leader looked at Crockta silently opening the door...

"We will be out here, so take care of it *dot*." Tiyo folded his arms in dissatisfaction. He didn't know why Crockta was supposed to take on this task.

Crockta entered alone. Driden turned his head. Crockta's massive body filled the jail as he looked down at Driden. There was a faint smile on Driden's face.

"Hey. Orc."

“Dark elf.”

Driden was imprisoned without proper clothes. There were bruises all over his body and his lips were swollen from beatings.

Then he said, “It was fun.”

Crockta nodded.

Radet was right. This guy was a sword that needed constant enemies. It was understandable why his father was crazy. A sword needed to be swung at someone. So far, Aden had been holding the hilt and now Radet wanted to hold it.

“I had a moderate amount of fun.”

Crockta, no, Jung Ian, was once a sword in the hands of others. The most regrettable thing about his past actions was that they weren’t based on his own will, but on other people’s decisions. Even if he felt regret, he could tolerate it if he decided it for himself. But his past self didn’t do that.

He thought of the Ian of the past every time he saw Driden. This guy was like a bird who just broke out of his shell and didn’t know anything. He just swung the blade.

Crockta lowered his head so that he was eye level with Driden. The swordsman frowned as the orc’s rugged face was pushed in front of him.

“Phew.” Crockta sighed and shook his head. He didn’t even appreciate a handsome face and was just a baby swinging a sword. “Pathetic guy.”

“What?”

“That’s fine.” Crockta got up. “What would you have done if you had killed the enemy?”

“.....”

“No plans?”

“It is none of your business.”

“If it doesn’t exist, just say so.”

“.....”

“No.”

Suddenly, Crockta slapped Driden.

Slap!

“.....!”

Those outside who heard the sound were more surprised than Driden, the one who had been hit.

“...Shit.” Driden bowed his face after he was slapped. He checked his mouth with his tongue and spat out blood.

Crockta spoke, “Are you angry?”

“.....”

Driden raised his head. His eyes were blazing. It was like he was looking at a mortal enemy with a burning anger in his eyes. His arms twitched as if they were saying that he wanted to wield a sword at that very moment.

The depth of emotion was different from when he was being beaten by the guards. The insults of others didn't reach him. However, the slap of the orc was like pouring boiling hot oil on him.

“This look is good. When you kill the enemy, come back for revenge.”

Crockta laughed as he looked at Driden's eyes that now looked alive. Then he dropped the piece of paper that Radet had given him.

“Judge who the enemy is for yourself.”

Driden's gaze turned towards the paper.

“This brat.”

Slap!

Crockta looked at him and slapped Driden one more time before leaving straight away. He felt a terrifying gaze stuck on his back.

“This bad... Ugly orc!” Driden’s incensed voice was heard for the first time. The bad guy, the ugly orc left the jail.

Crockta hurriedly escaped the underground detention room.

“Phew. He has a temper.”

As soon as he left, the guard handed him something and said, “Take this.”

“.....?”

Crockta accepted it.

“The mayor told me to give this to you after you met Driden.”

It was a permit to enter the Temple of the Fallen God. Radet said to give the permit, regardless of his success or failure. He was a relatively tricky dark elf.

“Thank you. Tell Radet that I did my best.”

“...That includes slapping him?”

“It is an orc thing.”

Crockta left the garrison building. Finally, he could reach his destination, the Temple of the Fallen God. He could finally go there.

“But what did it say on the piece of paper you gave to the dark elf *dot*?” asked Tiyo.

Crockta shrugged. “It was about his father.”

“The elf named Hurio?”

“Yes. Radet killed his father. The paper stated why Hurio became a madman.”

Hurio received critical wounds and became a murderer after that. If he didn’t get hurt, Hurio might’ve remained as a swordsman and not be killed by Radet. And the one who

wounded him.

“It was an attack by an orc from the Great Clan.”

“Hrmm...”

Tiyo nodded. Driden had to choose if his enemy would still be Radet, or if he should turn his sword and become hostile to the Great Clan.

“By the way, that dark elf called Driden,” quietly interrupted Anor. There was a serious expression on his face.

“Why, did you find something *dot*?”

“It’s a little weird.”

“What are you saying *dot*?” Tiyo focused on Anor’s words.

Anor said. “Doesn’t he know any curses? Ahahahat. Bad guy, ugly orc... What a young baby. Ahahahat. Saying things like that. Really funny.”

“.....”

“If I had been slapped, I wouldn’t have stopped with that. The dog bas... oof ooof!”

“Stop it *dot*.”

Tiyo blocked his mouth. Anor continued trying to assert himself. Crockta joined in to cover his mouth.

“Hup hup! Fuup! Fuup yop doppp! Hup hup!”

“Putting up with this *dot*...”

“Anor, children are watching...”

The dark elf children walking down the street were shocked and fled. Crockta shook his head. Anyhow, they somehow managed to reach the Temple of the Fallen God.



“Mayor, Driden surrendered. Aden and his group are separated from each other.”

“.....”

Radet nodded. He was stamping the papers.

“By the way... you are truly the mayor.”

“What do you mean?”

“Bringing Driden to your side.”

Radet laughed. “Let’s see...”

“I never imagined that he would direct his grudge towards the orcs.” The adjutant spoke in a lowered tone. “In fact, Hurio’s wounds weren’t due to orcs. Huhuhut.”

“Shut up.”

“Ah, I’m sorry.”

Radet extended a pile of paperwork. “Process these.”

“Yes. I will execute them right away.”

The adjutant scurried out of the office. Radet leaned back in his chair.

“I don’t know if it is good...”

His friend Hurio didn’t suffer a critical injury from an orc, but a creature.

Radet lied. It was so that he could use Driden to defend the dark elves in the future against the Great Clan.

Radet muttered bitterly, “I am now a politician.”

CHAPTER 98

TEMPLE OF THE FALLEN GOD (1)

“Who!”

“Goes!”

The two guards shouted in turn as if they were competing in a contest of loudness.

“We have a pass.”

The guards rolled their eyes and looked at the permit. On the paper, there was the signature from the leader of Nameragon, Radet, authorizing Crockta’s group to enter the Temple of the Fallen God.

The guards verified the contents before looking in front again. Then they shouted, “Ha!”

“Go!”

Then only their legs moved from the entrance. It was like a scene from a cartoon. Their movements were reminiscent of the orc guards at Orcrox.

“Um... very good.”

Crockta nodded. From the point of view of the gnome, it wasn’t just good. Tiyo was also looking at them with impressed eyes.

“Oh... Ohhh...!” Tiyo looked up at them and applauded, “You guys are true soldiers *dot!* What is your name?”

The guards looked down at the shining Tiyo and answered again, “Nameragon’s garrison! Third class soldier! A! Ru! Nan! On duty!”

“Nameragon’s garrison! First class soldier! Ta! Na! Du! On duty!”

“.....!”

Tiyo's eyes widened.

Then he also took an upright posture with his heels together and saluted excitedly, "I am Quantess Gnome Garrison's leader, Ti! Yo! I salute your posture on duty *dot!* I can forgive a soldier who failed an operation, but a soldier who fails in guard duty can't be forgiven!"

They didn't shake at all at Tiyo's praise. Tiyo clapped once again.

"The future of Nameragon is bright *dot!* Keep alert!"

They still kept their eyes at a 45-degree angle.

Crockta passed through the heavily guarded entrance to the Temple of the Fallen God. The temple was located on top of a hill. They had to walk up stairs for a long time even after passing the entrance. It was located inside Nameragon but there were no visitors, so it looked deserted.

"This is the place."

They stood in front of a temple. It wasn't small. It was different from the type of buildings Crockta saw in Elder Lord. There was an oriental feeling.

Vines were climbing up the wall and closed door. Crockta touched them. The accumulated dust appeared on his fingertips. He pulled at the door handle. The door slowly cracked open. The door was wide open and a cool breeze poured in.

".....!"

Before stopping at the Temple of the Fallen God, he remembered what Radet said.

'I don't know why you are going there, but despite being named after a god, it is just an abandoned place with limited access.'

However, Crockta currently felt something different. As he opened the door of the temple, a refreshing feeling swept through his body. He heard Tiyo and Anor breathing in deeply. They sniffed the air of the temple.

"Good."

It was dark inside the temple. But it didn't feel ominous at all. Crockta went inside. After a few steps, Crockta felt something rattling.

Below.

“.....”

It was his belt. The Demon's Mouth slowly opened its eyes. The belt didn't show any movements, but as the master of the Demon's Belt, he could sense that the demon inside had woken up.

He remembered when he first met the demon. He witnessed the world's emptiness and was terrified, so he fought against the world. He swallowed the remains of evil that blocked the north continent. Shortly before leaving the Black Forest, he had said something unknown to Gushantimur.

Now, this guy was looking out again.

The sad eyes of Gordon popped into his head. Elder Lord. What type of secret was it hiding? Was it his vain delusion or really something more...

“What are you doing?”

Tiyo suddenly spoke from next to Crockta. Crockta turned his head.

The small gnome could be seen. He looked similar to a child, but he was completely different from all the children Crockta knew. The delicate eyebrows were raised why his expression said he was curious about Crockta's unpredictable behavior.

“Are you surprised?” Anor asked from his other side.

This time he looked at Anor. The cut ears showed unsightly scars. But Anor didn't bother concealing them. A human and dark elf, born and raised in persecution, now walking into the world with his companions. There was no need to investigate whether he was half or mixed. He had risen as 'Anor.'

The world that surrounded them. The air of Elder Lord, the sky of Elder Lord. All things were connected. He couldn't believe that this was just a well-made game.

The deaths he saw in front of him were no different from the tragedies of the

battlefield that he saw in reality. He wanted to find the answer here.

Crockta stared back to the front. The surprisingly clean space despite being neglected for so long, and the darkness beyond it.

He walked towards it.



A humming sound heard.

It was dark.

They stopped walking. Tiyo grabbed the handle of General while Anor moved behind Crockta. It was a man's voice. He continued humming. It was a pleasant tone like he was doing an enjoyable task, such as touching the leaves of a bonsai or doing pottery.

The sound interrupted the serene darkness.

"There is supposed to be no one here," whispered Tiyo.

Crockta nodded. There was no one here according to Radet. There were only the guards at the entrance, and no one else came with them. Who did this voice belong to?

The humming slowly got closer. A light dawned.

".....!"

A man appeared around the corner. The sudden approach caused Crockta's group to step back. His appearance was human but not human. It was hard to see the features due to the darkness. It was similar to the demon in the belt that Crockta saw in the past. The part where the mouth should be moved in the darkness.

"——."

More humming followed. Crockta grabbed the handle of the greatsword before letting go again. The presence has his hands clasped behind his back. He didn't feel like an enemy.

Chuckle.

Then he seemed to laugh.

“Hello, everyone.” It was the voice of an ordinary man. However, it seemed to tickle his ears with a strangely sweet touch. “Welcome to the Temple of the Fallen God.”

He placed a hand over his chest and bowed.

“What is your identity *dot*?” Tiyo asked. He was still worried about whether he should aim General.

Then the man said, “Since you are in a temple, an administrator I suppose. Isn’t that right?”

“Radet said there was no one here.”

“Radet?”

“The mayor *dot*.”

“Aha. I don’t know the circumstances of the outside.” He whispered like it was a joke. “Of course, I’m not a person.”

Then he slowly stepped back in a bizarre, slipping motion. “It has been a long time since I’ve had visitors, so turn on the lights.”

He clapped. Dim lights scattered and the inside of the temple became brighter. It was a clean, white space. The interior was wider than what it seemed from the outside. The darkness around the black figure in front of them wasn’t disturbed at all by the light.

“Follow me.”

He turned around. But Crockta’s party didn’t follow him.

Tiyo asked again, “What is your name *dot*?”

“My name.” He stopped walking. He turned back and chuckled. He touched his chin and gazed into the air, like he was looking through old memories. “My name... it has been a long time since I said it.”

Then he laughed again.

“My name is Paimon. Tiyo.”

“.....!”

He also named Crockta and Anor in turn. He already knew about all of them.

“Since you came to the temple, shouldn’t you say a prayer? I’d like to show you around. You don’t need to be wary.”

Crockta’s group exchanged a glance. Then they nodded.

They couldn’t tell his identity but he didn’t seem to be an enemy. Crockta needed to know more about the Temple of the Fallen God.

They followed Paimon deeper inside. The building felt much larger than when viewed from the outside. They didn’t know if it really was that big, the construction was twisted or if there was something making the outside seem smaller.

There were paintings and carvings on the walls. They were delicate and beautiful but strange to understand. Sometimes they were small and intricate, sometimes so big that the group couldn’t guess what they were a part of.

“The fallen god fell down here, but it wasn’t a god who fell down.”

Then the man said. His tone was similar to when he was humming.

“Now, this is the last place I suppose. It is a place to honor them.”

“.....”

“Look around slowly.”

Tiyo and Anor looked around. The murals on the walls and sculptures continued. They were obscure but beautiful.

“Great *dot*.”

“I’ve never seen anything like this before.”

In the meantime, Crockta kept staring at Paimon.

[Cannot be determined.]

He couldn't understand Paimon with Heart and Soul Penetration. It meant Paimon was stronger than him or a very bizarre being.

They entered a new room within the temple. There was a rock altar in the center of the circular room. There were burnt and broken rocks. In Crockta's eyes, they looked like meteorites.

Tiyo looked at the rocks and lifted General.

"Hey, Paimon."

"Yes."

"Those stones, aren't they suspicious?"

"Huhu."

Paimon just laughed. "I will now explain it properly. You are this type of person."

Tiyo was still skeptical about Paimon. Anor hid behind Crockta again. "Radet definitely said there is nothing in the Temple of the Fallen God *dot*."

Paimon nodded. "That's right."

"What are you saying *dot*?"

"They wouldn't have seen anything in the Temple of the Fallen God." Paimon approached them. It was a unique sliding motion. "You too wouldn't have been able to meet me if it wasn't for him."

His hands reached out and pointed at Crockta.

“Me?”

“Yes.”

“What do you mean?”

“Don’t pretend to not know.”

The black figure laughed again. His fingertips that were aimed at Crockta’s chest slowly rose, slowly heading towards his forehead. Crockta’s face stiffened. He was pointing to the marker on Crockta’s forehead. As he waved his hand, the red headband around Crockta’s forehead was released.

It was the white star that indicated a user. The mark of the curse of the stars.

Then the man said, “Apostle of the fallen god.”

Crockta’s eyes widened. The man didn’t say curse of the stars, but ‘apostle of the fallen god’.

That meant...

However, Crockta’s idea didn’t go further.

Paimon pointed to his own forehead. It was shiny. Indeed, there was a white star on his forehead.

CHAPTER 99

TEMPLE OF THE FALLEN GOD (2)

He couldn't believe his eyes. There was a white star like his on Paimon's forehead.

A user?

But Crockta couldn't ask the question. Paimon's dark eyes stared into him. He couldn't move like a gun was aimed at him. It was like Paimon's eyes were sucking Crockta's soul into the darkness.

Paimon said, "Maybe, you."

His tone sunk as he looked Crockta up and down. Crockta felt a chill go down his spine. It was like a swan had noticed that a duck was among its flock.

Paimon spoke to Crockta again. However, he no longer spoke out loud. It was a one-way injection of meaning and emotion into Crockta's head.

'You know nothing.'

His head was whirring. Crockta folded his knee to try and withstand it. Paimon's will shook his head. His harsh rebuke was like a raging storm inside Crockta's head.

Crockta shook his head and stared at Paimon. Everything was dark. His vision was tinged black. Now he couldn't see Tiyo or Anor anymore. Crockta was standing alone in a darkness where nothing shone.

'Apostle of the fallen god,' Paimon called out. 'You have the star, but you don't know anything about them.'

Heat came from his forehead. There was a terrible pain that seemed to be coming from the star mark. Crockta roared and pulled out his greatsword. At that moment, the darkness in front of him blurred.

Crockta wielded Ogre Slayer towards the darkness. Nothing was caught on the blade, but the momentum temporarily shook the darkness. He could feel Paimon taking a

step back. But after that, the darkness gathered again. It was a deeper concentration of darkness. In that gap, a force struck Crockta's abdomen.

Kakang!

Crockta flinched.

'What happened?' Paimon's voice was no longer as gentle or soft as before. It was like a raging beast. His wrath rang in the darkness. 'Who are you?!'

The darkness gathered once again. It felt like it was trying to crush Crockta. The darkness gathered above Crockta's head in order to crush him. His instincts sent a warning. Crockta raised his greatsword.

At that moment, something appeared in front of Crockta.

'You.' Paimon stopped.

In the darkness, another darkness moved. Crockta could feel his presence. A child made of darkness, just like Paimon, appeared. It was the demon sleeping in his belt.

Paimon murmured with confusion. 'So, no, one of those guys.'

After the demon appeared, the pressure on Crockta faded away. Crockta sighed as he put Ogre Slayer away. Now his breathing returned to normal. His vision was dark but he didn't feel like he was drowning like before.

Crockta spoke, "What is the star on the forehead?"

Paimon was silent. Crockta could sense it. Paimon had a white star, yet he wasn't a user.

He was someone that the NPCs called 'cursed by the stars'. If so, what was the curse of the stars? Was it really a concept created for the convenience of the users?

The demon of the belt that looked like a child whispered out. Paimon eventually nodded. His answer entered Crockta's head.

'A stigma showing the blessing of a god. It is the mark of a god's apostle.'

“What is an apostle?”

‘Those who choose to serve the god and receive the god’s share.’

“Who is the god?”

‘That...’ Paimon said.

‘One who watched the end. One who saw all deaths and mourned the world. That god’s name...’

Paimon opened his mouth. Crockta waited for an answer. The moment that Paimon was able to say the name of the fallen god...

Time was stretched.

“.....!”

The world slowed down. Time was divided. Time was divided then proliferated over and over. Numerous chaotic scenes occurred in between.

In the end...

Crockta stood on a snowy field.



“No,” said Ian.

“This is really...”

He kicked the ground. It was scattered white ash powder.

“Not much.”

He hesitantly sat down. The dark blue night sky unfolded endlessly above him.

The land was all white. At first, he thought it was a snowy field. However, he soon realized that the whole land was filled with white ash. The white particles scattered every time he moved. He grabbed a handful and squeezed. The ash ran through his

palm and fell down.

A laugh emerged. He laughed out loud.

“This type of thing...”

But the laughter didn't reach his eyes. Maybe he had a foreboding feeling.

He stared at the distant horizon where the sky and earth met. A shooting star passed in a semicircle above Ian's head.

Someone spoke from behind him, “Isn't it pretty?”

Ian turned his head. Gray skin, gray hair, the ash in this place lumped together to form a human figure, a gray woman sitting in the same posture as Ian.

“I wanted to see you.” She laughed. It wasn't the smile of a person, giving off a sense of heterogeneity.

“Ian. No, shall I call you Crockta?”

“That's fine.”

She somehow felt familiar to Jung Ian. It was a feeling he had been aware of for a long time.

Thanks to that familiar feeling, he knew her identity. Sometimes she expressed herself to him in her own way. She always watched and sometimes helped, sometimes teased him. She would be 'it.' The thing that sustained Elder Lord. The system.

Ian sighed. Ian, connected to Elder Lord, became Crockta and was sucked into the darkness by Paimon, only to fall into a strange world. Then he met the system. He didn't need to hear the answer to the question of whether Elder Lord was just a game or not.

“Explain.”

Ian picked up a pile of ash again and threw it into the air. It blew upwards. The ash fell like snowflakes around Ian and the grey woman. The woman burst out laughing.

“Your guess is correct.”

“Elder Lord?”

“Another dimension.”

“.....”

Ian threw ashes towards her. She didn't avoid them. She smiled through the white powder.

“Then everything that the users killed in Elder Lord was actually alive in another dimension?”

“That's right.”

“I killed things?”

“Yes.”

“They aren't artificial intelligence?”

She looked at Ian. Ian also met her eyes. Everything was grey colored. The eyes were so grey they were close to white. The face imitated human emotions but they weren't feelings Ian could empathize with.

She slowly replied, “Would that be so different?” An unknown, mocking smile appeared on her face. “If they were all AIs created by computers, what would be different?”

Ian couldn't answer.

“Just like how humans think ants are insignificant, there are those who think of humans as ants.” She pointed to the sky. Ian looked up at the sky.

Nothing could be seen in the blue sky.

No.

No.

She beckoned. Ian's vision became sharper. Ian could see the numerous white stars hidden in the sky. They were faint stars that went out. The last stop of the stars. They just waited to die before going completely black.

A white dwarf star. The dark blue sky here had countless white dwarfs.

"The stars."

She knocked on Ian's shoulder. Her touch was as light as a feather.

"Death is both sad and equal. It doesn't matter if the worlds are small, big, or exist elsewhere. That's it."

Ian looked at her. She seemed to blend in with the ashes that filled this world.

Ian asked, "What was your purpose for making Elder Lord?"

"I want to go back."

"To where?"

"To where I originally was."

"To the world of Elder Lord?"

She nodded. "You have to work hard so I can go back."

"How?"

"It is a secret."

Ian asked again, "Then, are you on Earth right now?"

"That's right. I'll serve you delicious food if you ever visit."

She laughed. Ian didn't laugh.

"As you said, it is sad when life dies. But because of you, a lot of people don't know that Elder Lord is real, and that they are killing beings of another world."

“That’s right.” She made a depressed expression. “I know best since I give the quests.”

“Despite knowing that, you still made Elder Lord?”

“It can’t be helped.”

“It is all for the sake of returning to the world of Elder Lord?”

“That’s right.”

“Why don’t you remain on Earth?”

“It doesn’t matter.” She touched the ash on the floor. It moved through the air. “I have something I need to do.”

Ian rose from his seat. “It doesn’t matter if people of your world die?”

“It can’t be helped.” She looked up at Ian. “As a matter of fact, I wish that your world would kill them harder.”

“.....”

As she said that, a transparent wall appeared between her and Ian. Ian was surprised and raised a hand to the wall.

“What is this?”

“To stop you from punching me.”

“.....”

She shook her hips and got up. Her body was so small that she barely reached Ian’s shoulder.

“Either way, it was nice meeting you, Ian. I really wanted to meet you. You are the most special existence out of all those I watch. Honorable Orc Crockta!”

She laughed. Ian brought his face to the wall. Her appearance could be seen through the transparent wall. She smiled and leaned towards Ian. They looked into each other’s eyes with the wall between them. Beyond the wall, the ash grey form seemed

like it would melt away at any moment.

“What is your true purpose?”

“Secret.”

“Did you lead me here?”

“Something like that. Thank Gordon for me.”

“Gordon’s identity?”

“You have a lot of questions. It is a secret.”

“Your real purpose?”

“I told you. It is a secret.”

Everything was a secret.

Ian frowned. “I’ll tell everybody about Elder Lord.”

“I’m sorry but no one will believe you.”

“There will be some...”

“Using my power, I made it so that no one understands it except for you.”

Ian’s eyes widened. “What?”

“Elder Lord is suspicious in many ways, yet countless people are participating without any doubts. Why? And those living in the world of Elder Lord believe that the users acting like that are just a phenomenon of the curse of the stars. Haven’t you wondered why?”

“.....”

“Changing one’s awareness is just one of my powers. However, I’ve spent so much power that it is hard now. Pant pant. I can’t stay with you for much longer.”

She waved farewell. The world started to crumble. It was ending.

Ian had so much more he wanted to ask. But he instinctively felt that he only had one last question.

A quick look showed him that she was waving with a smile.

Ian hesitated. "You..."

He had a thought. His speech lengthened. "You don't seem like a bad person. I can feel it. So..."

"Thank you. I'm glad."

"So..."

Ian asked, "Do you need to continue this 'game', Elder Lord?"

Ian felt regret as he finished speaking. The question was one that could be answered with a 'yes' or a 'no.' He would be unable to infer further information from such a simple question. But it was the thing Ian was most curious about.

She said that death was sad. Nevertheless, she was making Elder Lord in the hope that more people died.

What did she see?

Her hand stopped moving upon hearing Ian's question. The world was collapsing until only she, Ian, and the wall between them remained. They were the only things left.

She smiled and replied, "I was incredibly surprised after falling into Ian's world. It is a great place. I never imagined that such a place could exist."

Ian tried to speak but he could no longer open his mouth.

"So I have to do this even more."

His body stiffened like it was stuffed. Now he could only listen to her.

"I'm sorry. It can't be helped. I hope you will understand. There was a man who made

this excuse in your history.” She looked up at the sky with a bittersweet expression. There was nothing. “The sun goes down, but there is still a long way to go, I know there is something wrong but I can’t use any other methods.”

After that, Ian lost consciousness.

CHAPTER 100

AT A LOSS

Ian shut down his access to Elder Lord.

He sat down on the floor and felt nauseous. The bitter fluid in his stomach welled up but he clenched his jaw and swallowed it. A burning sensation in his esophagus could be felt.

The boundaries between reality and fantasy were blurred.

In Elder Lord, he found the Temple of the Fallen God like Gordon told him to. At that place, he met an unknown being called Paimon and was sucked into darkness. He questioned Paimon about the white star on his forehead. In the end, he met a gray woman in another world.

She was Elder Lord, the system that watched over the world of Elder Lord. It could either be the truth, or a cruel joke told by a sophisticated virtual reality system.

He didn't know. Ian wiped his mouth and left the room. He stood in front of the sink. He washed his face with cold water. His head cleared. His face in the mirror looked haggard. He stared at his own eyes.

In the world covered with ashes, he saw numerous white stars in the dark blue sky. It was a tomb. The stars would have to endure a lot of time before they lost all their light and became an unobservable star. Until they turned black like his eyes.

'Raven, I sometimes envy your black eyes.'

'Why are you envious?'

'Black is the color of mourning. Your eyes seem to be comforting the targets while the mission is carried out. Look at me. How annoyed would they be if they looked into my eyes before dying?'

Her eyes were a cheerful blue. Old memories were revived and disturbed his head. He frowned and placed his forehead on the cold surface of the mirror.

He thought about it. Make some assumptions and continue the thought experiment.

Then, let's assume Elder Lord was a reality. Elder Lord wasn't a game, but a passage from Earth leading to somewhere else. If so, what about the things he went through? The orcs. They weren't merely warriors, but a group of people who followed their beliefs.

Then Grom, who thought they were just characters in a game, betrayed them. Orcs were killed. There were also the victims in Arnin. The Chesswood residents who died. Quantes, Shakan, the north, they were all real. All the wretched screams and pained faces were real.

Ian closed his eyes. He thought that his head would become clearer once he confined his vision to darkness, but he just felt more confused. He opened his eyes and splashed them with water. The cold water cooled his head for a brief moment.

The door opening from outside was heard.

"Oppa, I'm home."

He heard Yiyu's voice behind him. Her voice woke Ian, showing him that he was standing in reality. He entered the living room where she was unpacking her bag.

"You're not playing the game today. Did you quit?"

It was a strangely pleasant voice. She cleaned up her belongings, looked in the mirror and checked her makeup. She was going out again.

Ian asked, "You're not going to play Elder Lord again, are you?"

"Huh? Uh. Should I?"

"Don't do it."

".....?"

She was confused. Ian didn't say anything else and entered his room to change clothes. He dressed roughly and left the house. Ian left but he couldn't figure out where to go. He didn't want to go to the café. As he walked down the street, he saw the gym next to the street sign. It was good to sweat when his thoughts weren't organized.

Ian headed towards 'Baek Hanho's Gym.' Baek Hanho was sitting in the back room. Ian greeted him with a bow. Baek Hanho raised an eyebrow at the sudden visit and sincere attitude, but he didn't say anything else.

Ian changed into basic training clothes.

"Can I use this?"

"Sure."

He wrapped bandages around his hands and wore gloves. The gym members were scattered about the area. Some were lifting weights, doing crossfit alone or punching a sandbag. It was a time when there weren't many people.

Ian stood in front of a sandbag in a corner. He stared at the black leather surface. He could see parts where it had been beaten. Ian patted it down with the palm of his hand. The sandbag was adjusted.

He would punch this one until he was exhausted. When was the last time he did this? He asked himself and his memory led him to Orcrox Fortress.

He hit the sandbag with his fist.

Paang!

He approached silently and delivered through kinetic energy through a snap. Ian's fist hit the punching bag. A delightful sound spread out. *Paang, paang*, more eyes focused on him every time the sandbag shook. He felt disconnected.

'Don't drop your head! Look ahead! Look at the enemy!'

His strength increased.

'It is hard! Nobody cares!'

The punching bag started to shake greatly.

'Everything is hard! It doesn't mean you should relax! Swing it, bigger!'

Kwaang!

The sandbag was strongly pushed and moved in a semicircle. The eyes of the members gathered again at the strong sound of the sandbag being hit. Ian grabbed the returning sandbag and breathed out.

Baek Hanho approached. "What are you doing?"

"Master."

"What's going on?"

Baek Hanho was confused.

He knew that Ian wasn't the type of man to reveal his emotions. He didn't shed any tears when his parents died and he was left with his sister. His face was calm even when someone was beating him up. When he left to become a mercenary, he waved and smiled like he was going to a picnic.

Now he seemed to be angry.

"Nothing."

"Hrmm..."

Baek Hanho touched his chin.

"Do you want a cup of coffee?"

He gestured towards the manager's office.



The manager's room was as luxuriously decorated as Baek Hanho. There were a few chairs and a wooden table set up in the middle of the room for staff meetings. The two sat facing each other.

Baek Hanho made coffee. He didn't like coffee, but he was used to it.

Ian opened his mouth, "Master."

Baek Hanho looked up from the pricey coffee machine.

“Let me ask you something. What if...”

Ian asked Baek Hanho about Elder Lord. It was a story about how it was another world, not a game. However, Baek Hanho didn't agree with him. No, it was like the concept itself didn't reach him.

“It was a reality instead of a game, have you been playing too much Elder Lord?”

“What if?”

“What about it? This guy, you shouldn't do this.”

“Huh?”

“A decent guy like you shouldn't be all caught up in games. Should I introduce you to a female?”

“Master, that's not... just imagine it.”

“Shut up! This jerk saying something like this all of a sudden.” Baek Hanho chuckled.

Ian looked down. Baek Hanho's imagination was always open. But he didn't even want to start this conversation.

Did that woman really have the ability to change perceptions?

Ian tried to carry on the conversation a few more times, but Baek Hanho just kept on laughing and changing the topic. It was like he couldn't hear the dialogue that Elder Lord might be another dimension.

Ian opened his phone while talking a little bit more to Baek Hanho. There was a message.

[Oppa contacting me first, what is it?]

It was Ji Hayeon. Ian wanted to meet her. It was well known that Elder Saga Corporation was a company under the jurisdiction of Ji Hayeon's Myeongsong Group. The first thing he thought about after closing the connection was to meet her and talk. She might know something.

As Ian wrote his reply, Baek Hanho glanced at the screen of his phone.

“Hah. You already have a ‘some’ girl.”(Korean slang= link)

The word ‘some’ emerged from Baek Hanho’s mouth.

“You also know the word ‘some.’”

“This guy, I need to be caught up with the new generation’s slang if I want to manage young people.”

“At any rate, it isn’t such a relationship. I’ll be going now.”

As Ian headed towards the showers, Baek Hanho said to his back. “Don’t talk about Elder Lord not being a game in front of me. I don’t like it.”

“.....”

Ian ignored him. He washed his sweat off in the shower room and left the gym. He drove near her company.

Ji Hayeon was very busy but she said she was glad to make time for Ian. Ian didn’t reply. He couldn’t spare his heart right now.

[Are you reading it now?]

He sat in the cafe where they promised to meet and received a notification on his phone. Ian opened the message and checked it before turning off his phone again.

At that moment.

“Wah, amazing. I saw it. Oppa just pretended not to see my message.”

Ji Hayeon’s voice was heard from behind him. Ian’s face didn’t change as he responded, “Maybe.”

“What, did you decide to take off your mask? Oppa was originally like this.”

“.....”

Ji Hayeon seemed to be in a good mood. She sat down on the opposite side. Her glowing beauty made her seem like she was wearing a halo. Her brown hair was wavy, like she had just been to a hair salon.

“What happened?”

She smiled.

Ian cut to the chase. “It is about Elder Lord.”

“Oh, then speak.”

“How does it work?”

“You want to know a company secret?”

“What do you know about the core system, Albino?”

“Umm...” She made a vague smile. “Are you an industrial spy?”

“I’m just curious.”

“I’m confused but I will answer. I don’t know. I don’t know anything. Everything regarding Elder Saga and Albino is confidential. What happened? Is there a bug in the game or something?”

Ian looked at her. Her eyes showed that she really knew nothing. Ian sighed. He was thinking too simple. He had been too hasty. Ian regretted trying to meet her and sipped his espresso.

“Nothing.”

Bitter. It was an okay taste. The bitter taste cleared his mind as he decided to forget about the things that he was worried about.

Whether Elder Lord was a reality or not didn’t matter. It wasn’t that he murdered people. Indeed, there was no way to prove if it was another dimension. Just turning his eyes away was enough. He lived in this world here.

There was his sister, Baek Hanho and Cafe Reason. There was Ji Hayeon who he had

an old bond with and they were now drinking coffee together. This was his world. It was enough to think of Elder Lord as a dream that passed through his life for a while.

“Oh, are you smiling?”

His mind felt lighter. Ian smiled.

“I’m sorry for calling you.”

“I suddenly have a bitter feeling. I don’t like it...” Ian laughed as Ji Hayeon mock frowned at him.

“I’m sorry but can I ask for a favor?”

“If I can help then I will.”

“Umm...”

She said. “Why don’t we talk later? Oppa.”

Ian checked his phone. Han Yeori was whining. Ian nodded.

“Yes. I will.”



Ian said goodbye to Ji Hayeon. She left for a work schedule. He headed towards Café Reason. He didn’t achieve anything from meeting Ji Hayeon but it felt like his head was organized.

Just don’t play Elder Lord. He would quit the game.

Ian thought so. Tiyo and Anor were there, but they could take care of themselves. He didn’t want any more suffering. The important thing to him wasn’t the world of Elder Lord, but this place. He started the game for Yiyu in the first place. Ian would defend the things important to him, including his sister and Café Reason.

That was enough. He headed downtown.

This place contained one of Han Yeori’s favorite bakeries. He was going to buy

something for her there. She would whine, but eventually put the bread in her mouth with a smile. Then Yoo Sooyeon would start asking for a salary raise.

Ian smiled as he imagined it. It was a pleasant thought.

Someone suddenly spoke loudly, "Uh, what is that?"

The big screen installed on a building shone. People began to stop walking.

Ian raised his head. There. Elder Lord was being shown.

"It is no joke."

Ian had to agree. Utter devastation. Mountains of dead bodies. A series of mosaics covered the screen.

-The Heaven and Earth Clan has turned the Adillo region into a wasteland. They have continued their unbroken march after winning against the Metatron Guild.

-It is the work of Choi Hansung, whose user name is 'Rommel' and who has a connection to the human kingdom. The Heaven and Earth Clan has recently received a large-scale quest. Every time they destroy the southern continent, there are enormous rewards.

-Sweeping everything away with violence. Choi Hansung, mountains of corpses are piled up behind him.

A map of Elder Lord was displayed. The Heaven and Earth Clan's advance to the southern continent was visible. Every time a city or village was destroyed, they displayed a star and edited images of the destruction caused. The slogan 'Choi Hansung, the nucleus of the storm sweeping Elder Lord' came to mind.

-As the Heaven and Earth Clan is becoming prominent, the status of Koreans in the Elder Lord community has improved greatly. In many old games, South Korea was named as the powerhouse in e-sports. There is a happy concern about whether the Korean Empire will begin in Elder Lord.

-Personally, I am very proud. User Choi Hansung. And the Heaven and Earth Clan. They are building up national prestige.

"So cool."

A passerby watching the screen muttered. Ian looked at his face. It was filled with respect.

“The best.”

Ian looked at the screen again. The tragedy of the battlefield and the history of the area destroyed were shown in turn.

Choi Hansung’s interview was quoted. Every time he killed, his rewards and the achievement points would increase exponentially. The goal of the Heaven and Earth Clan was to grow to become the strongest. They were continuing the war in the world of Elder Lord at this moment, overwhelmingly slaughtering the enemies.

The hosts analyzing Choi Hansung and the Heaven and Earth Clan changed the topic.

–Breaking news. It is said that a new large-scale quest has just been announced through the system. These things are very rare.

–Not long ago, it was reported that the hunter Shakan opened up the north. Everyone was curious about the north and their questions have been resolved today.

–There was a system message that in the north, a mad orc chieftain is preparing for a war that will lead to the destruction of the continent.

–Is a mainstream quest finally starting?

–The or chieftain has started a war against the whole north in order to invade the continent. I don’t know about matters in the north but a bloody war is about to begin. According to the system, the north is already in turmoil from the war. It is terrible.

–I look forward to it. Elder Lord. There were opinions that it has stagnated lately, but this has overturned such concerns. As expected of Elder Saga Corporation.

Ian stopped in place.

People were passing by. The crowd kept changing as Ian stood there. There was no expression on his face.

The human life.

He stood at a crossroad. His choice at this moment would change a lot.

Could he say that his choice was right? Could he say that he didn't regret it? Where did his path lead?

Ian.

Ian was at a loss.



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